

ANTOINE SALOMON and GUY COGÉVAL

# Vuillard

*Critical Catalogue  
of Paintings and Pastels*

Skira

Wildenstein Institute

E. Vuillard



ANTOINE SALOMON

GUY COGEVAL

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of Paintings and Pastels*

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Institute



The art of Édouard Vuillard (1868-1940) spans two centuries: he was a major player in post-impressionism in the same way as Gauguin or Seurat, but he also participated in the renewal of decorative art after 1900, and then in the "return to order" following the First World War.

Born into a modest family, he very soon turned towards painting. At the Lycée Condorcet, where Bergson and Mallarmé were then teaching, he met Kerr-Xavier Roussel, the future painter, and Aurélien Lugné-Poe, the future theatre producer, who were to lead him into the group of Nabis at the beginning of 1889. He painted a number of provocative compositions (*The Lilacs*, *Octagonal Self-Portrait*) and joined the cloisonniste avant-garde led by Paul Gauguin and Émile Bernard. Between 1890 and 1895, he produced numerous sets for the most innovative theatre (Maeterlinck, Ibsen, Strindberg). From 1892 to 1895, he refined the subjects that would make him famous: *petit-bourgeois* interiors, scenes drawn from family life in which we see his mother, sister and employees from the corset workshop at their daily tasks. From 1894, commissions for larger-scale decorations were to follow each other in a regular procession: the panels for Claude Anet (1898), the immense *Landscapes of the Île-de-France* (1899), and so on to the famous decorations for the Comédie des Champs-Élysées (1912).

In appealing to the fashionable drawing rooms and worldly sets, he ensured his success, producing portraits of industrialists, bankers and actresses, painted in Paris or on holiday in Normandy, Brittany and the South of France. This critical catalogue of Édouard Vuillard's œuvre provides the opportunity to study the French artist's art with greater accuracy. Hundreds of photographs, taken by Vuillard himself, as well a hitherto unpublished series of preparatory drawings and sketches – associated with his Journal – help to outline the artist's creative process as no other volume has been able before now.



**Édouard Vuillard**  
**(1868-1940)**





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ANTOINE SALOMON AND GUY COGEVAL

# Vuillard

**The Inexhaustible Glance**

*Critical Catalogue of Paintings and Pastels*

Volume I

*with the collaboration of*  
Mathias CHIVOT

Skira

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Wildenstein Institute



Jacques and Antoine Salomon's  
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Édouard Vuillard by SIAE 2003

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## Foreword

by Alec and Guy Wildenstein

10 January 1987

Cher Daniel Wildenstein, vous devez savoir par mon fils que, depuis bientôt dix ans, après cette "apothéose" chez Durant-Ruel et ensuite, chez vous, à Londres, dont je vous garde une infinie reconnaissance, j'ai pris ma retraite.

Voici pour quoi je vous écris : vous devez aussi vous rappeler qu'il m'arrivait d'entretenir votre père du projet du catalogue Viillard que j'étais entrepris, en 1942, avec l'encouragement de K. R. Roussel. A cet effet, l'idée m'était venue d'y associer un spécialiste que j'étais allé recruter à l'École Normale, dont le directeur m'avait chaudement recommandé André Chastel, récemment revenu de captivité. L'époque ne s'y prêtant guère, nous dûmes interrompre notre travail au bout de deux ans... pour le reprendre quelques années plus tard, avec Monique Schneider Maunoury que je présentais à votre père, en confiant à mon fils Antoine le soin de poursuivre cette œuvre.

Le temps a passé !... ma lettre a donc pour but de vous demander dans quelle mesure vous seriez disposé à m'aider dans l'édition de cet ouvrage qui représente, pour moi, une œuvre de pitié. Je voudrais bien, si possible, m'en entretenir, un jour, avec vous.

Jacques Salomon

P.S. Ma démarche auprès de vous n'est dictée par la devise de Guillaume-le-Taciturne : "il n'est pas nécessaire d'espérer pour entreprendre, ni de réussir pour persévérer", que Viillard citait souvent... et que Roussel avait retenu par le mot latin PERCE qui s'inscrivait dans la page de garde de ses livres.\*

There could be no finer tribute to our father than this letter from Jacques Salomon, Édouard Vuillard's nephew, which encapsulates the history of this catalogue, the mutual respect and trust of those involved and our admiration for the painter.

Today, two years after Jacques Salomon's death, we are happy to see the flowering of this project launched sixty years ago and completed, despite many difficulties, thanks to Antoine Salomon's determination and farsightedness and to his wife Colette's unfailing commitment to the cause.

The choice of Guy Cogeval to write the catalogue seemed self-evident to Daniel Wildenstein and the Salomons. His erudition and understanding of Vuillard as a person could not fail to do justice to the painter's work. We can see today what a wonderfully wise choice it was.

We should like to end this tribute with a little family sidelight: as a little girl our mother Martine posed with her two sisters for the *Frieze* commissioned by their father Marcel Kapferer, the great collector and friend of Édouard Vuillard.





## Introduction

by Guy Cogeval

Putting together a comprehensive catalogue of an artist's paintings and pastels is always a long and exacting project, an overwhelming task. This one has been more demanding than most, since in addition to a considerable number of works (almost three thousand of them), Vuillard deliberately left behind him a great mass of documents of all kinds that had to be examined. Furthermore, his personality, though to some extent familiar, has often been misinterpreted. The avowed goal of this project was from the start to build up a fairer and more focused picture of Édouard Vuillard as both artist and human being: a son, brother, uncle, lover, Parisian, tireless reader, intellectual, with all his contradictions and his passions. The book is meant to testify to the stature of this leading protagonist of Post-Impressionism, who was a contemporary of Gauguin and Seurat and yet painted two thirds of his œuvre in the first forty years of the twentieth century. Thus he was also a contemporary of Matisse, Picasso, Cubism, and the *Rappel à l'ordre* (Call to Order) that followed the 1914-18 war. Here was an artist who could find his own place away from these movements and these towering figures, while always keeping an eye on the potential for new developments in art. This is the first, and most obvious, point.

In considering him as a psychosocial being, it had become customary to think of Vuillard as a monk shut up in his fortress, too shy to be a man-about-town. The critics were happy to admit his talent in certain areas: the intimacy of his petit bourgeois family scenes, the remarkable technical virtuosity of his great decorative panels. Others went so far as to appreciate his late portraits (goodness, how daring!). But the man's reserve and apparent modesty would seem to have ruled out any notion of a willed, dynamic, in a word, 'secular' approach to creation in his chosen path. Countless commentators have trotted out the same old story of a monkish

recluse, voluntarily cut off from the modern world's innovations and pleasures, indifferent to the political events of his time. And yet the exact opposite was true. I trust that this research proves as much, by revealing the colourful, quietly bossy and sometimes bad-tempered character he was, with his cowardly moments and acts of generosity, a decisive and passionate man of absolute probity, capable of imposing his views on those around him and above all of transforming the trivial happenings of daily life into the very stuff of his painting. Indeed, many of his cosy interiors tell stories of his life, real dramas that affected him; a number of his large decorative panels contain unmistakable references to his family and friends, the people he held dear, to an extent that no one had hitherto suspected. There are even a number of *à clef* paintings. Over more than half a century Vuillard created a body of work that insistently poses the involutive question of its proper place within the modern tradition.

To go back to the *Catalogue raisonné*, which became over time a *Catalogue critique*. The saga of this book began at the end of World War II. It is finally published in 2003. During the war the initial task of sorting and listing the contents of the artist's studio was entrusted by Vuillard's heirs to André Chastel, a choice that was to prove wise and even sumptuous, given that the École Normale student turned soldier came back from a German prison camp to become the greatest post-war French art historian. In carrying out this task Chastel described with care and discernment the pictures he was classifying in the studio stock. These, of course, did not include paintings sold abroad in the artist's lifetime between 1900 and 1940, which include some major works. Jacques Salomon, Vuillard's nephew, set to work at the end of the war to complete André Chastel's inventory, respecting the same descriptive principles as his predecessor, whose entries



often achieve literary excellence. We decided to reproduce their texts in this catalogue as they stand: they are to be found after the technical notes signed with the initials AC or JS. As first-hand evidence by eye-witnesses they are irreplaceable regarding paintings that we have been unable to locate, and it was only the written accounts by these two Vuillard specialists that permitted us to restore to these compositions their original colours, details and depth of field. Their historic flavour, as it were. In the main this was a simple descriptive inventory without generalization or bias. The latter, however, can be found in the books on Vuillard that both men were writing whilst working on the huge project of analysing the documentation. Chastel's book was published in 1946 and Jacques Salomon's in 1945 (it was re-published with additional text in 1961 and 1968). To these first essays on the artist must be added the indispensable study by Claude Roger-Marx, also published in 1946 and remarkable for the quality of its prose. Vuillard was fortunate in finding three such commentators. Their sense of language, presented as the 'perceptible equivalent' of painting, is a consolation for the *weighty* demonstrations of scholarship so common in contemporary criticism.

Eventually the task was entrusted to a number of researchers, each of whom did an outstanding job tracking down exhibitions in which the works appeared, the history of their ownership, assembling all the critical studies published during the 'Nabi' painter's lifetime and organizing his correspondence. Here we must mention Monique Schneider-Maunoury, who, with Jacques Salomon, established the first card catalogue, an essential reference source. However, a crucial component of the catalogue was missing until the artist's Journal became available to the researchers in 1981; it had been deposited with the Institut de France by Kerr-Xavier Roussel after Vuillard's death, with the proviso that it was not to be opened for forty years. The job of deciphering the painter's difficult handwriting was entrusted by Antoine Salomon to a number of people whose contribution has been most valuable. I should like here to pay tribute to the efforts of Alix Chevallier and Sylvie Yeu in transforming a mass of hand-written notes (several dozen notebooks) into scrupulously analyzed typewritten pages. Other experts followed, from Juliet Wilson-Bareau, whose investigations covered the artist's previously little known country holidays as well as his various homes in Paris, to Annette Leduc and Brooks Beaulieu, but no synthetic analysis came of their work – at least, nothing comparable to the masterly studies by Elizabeth Easton and Gloria Groom –

since most of the researchers seem to have been intimidated and paralyzed by the size of the archives. Too much documentation can be dangerous!

Where to start? It was a legitimate question. Every day Vuillard wrote a page in his current notebook about his outings and the people he met and dined with. These entries, generally in a telegraphic style, are of no great interest as literature, but the Journal also provides valuable information on commissions, the stage he had reached in the execution of each painting, pastel or décor, and the hesitation he often felt. With its help, the re-dating of the works in this book is almost complete with regard to most of the studies published until about 1990. The writing of the critical catalogue was entrusted to me by the Salomon family and the Wildenstein Institute in the summer of 1996. I must stress here the decisive part played by the late and greatly missed Daniel Wildenstein – whose expertise with descriptive catalogues was unequalled – in the total re-shaping of this work, which had become somewhat bogged down. I cannot forget his humanity and his incomparable sense of humour. He saved the project. What is more, he always demonstrated complete confidence in me, supporting the not invariably conformist approach of the catalogue. At first I thought I should have to embark – it was in a way my mandate – on the labour of rewriting and further researching what had been left by my immediate predecessors. In fact, it was soon apparent that some important paintings had been neglected, that the interpretation of titles and meanings of the works might be wrong, and that sketches I found illuminating had been left unconsulted in their boxes. A temptation to tautology hovered over these earlier efforts: 'Vuillard is Vuillard, he is sufficient unto himself'. There were real problems with the iconography, and above all no clear picture of Vuillard's personality emerged. In the files of the Salomon Archives there are letters from the artist's mother and sister and from Misia, Lucy Hessel and other mistresses that reveal major family rows, passionate relationships and jealous scenes. By linking together and 'meshing' all these papers I was able to establish that the enigmatic Édouard was by turns a cynic and a romantic, both Jansenist and boisterous, leading a more hectic life than had been supposed. Failing to identify the person or persons with whom an artist shares his most private feelings is a questionable approach even if he only paints black squares on a white background. But when three-quarters of his work depicts his mother, his sister, his friends and his lovers, such an attitude looks like puritanical blindness or just plain care-

lessness. Instead of two years, therefore, my task took six, inevitably prolonged by the need for greater precision. I had to meet the people who had known Vuillard in his lifetime: as well as Antoine Salomon, I was given invaluable testimony by Annette Vaillant, Daniel Wildenstein, Jean-Claude Bellier, Lulu Kléné (Lucy Hessel's adopted daughter) and Alain Vernay. The study needed to be exhaustive and bring all the strands together. I gradually came to feel a deep and brotherly affection for this great man. The project has now come safely into port, at almost exactly the same time as the catalogue of the great Vuillard retrospective of Washington, Montreal, Paris and London.

My warmest thanks naturally go to Antoine and Colette Salomon, Édouard Vuillard's heirs, for their passionate commitment to making the great Édouard more widely known. At times their lives have been caught up in the fate of the *catalogue raisonné*. The generous access they gave me to their archival holdings and the absolute freedom I had to use them were admirable. But above all, the total lack of censure on their part with regard to what I was able to find out about the relations between Vuillard and his family, Vuillard and Kerr-Xavier Roussel, and Vuillard and women constitutes an exception in the history of monographs, in cases where the family still holds the intellectual rights to the artist's work. We know the extent to which some 'artists' widows' can be possessive and temperamental, obstructing the genuinely scholarly work of researchers. There was none of that about the Salomons, who have much of their forebear's light-hearted humanism. I want to thank Antoine, whose unerring eye can always tell a real Vuillard from a fake, for having faith in me from the start, and most of all Colette, who for six whole years gave me the run of their apartment, where a sitting-room had been turned into a Vuillard library. The holdings comprise letters and postcards from the artist's nearest and dearest, put in order by Antoine Salomon over the past fifty years, together with sketchbooks, data sheets for each work, a complete photo library and a collection of between five and six thousand preparatory drawings: all this documentation enabled me to assign an exact date to paintings and pastels hitherto only roughly dated.

As is invariably the case with a critical catalogue, the texts written, corrected and approved between 1995 and 1999 were still unpublished in 2002. Furthermore, the very concept of the book changed rapidly. The number of entries I was supposed to write leapt from 200 to almost 800. I had ruled out endless chapter introductions followed by purely technical

entries. This catalogue was not meant to be read straight through from the first page to the last; rather like a palindrome, it can be approached by various 'entrances'. In this respect I must confess my indebtedness to the writer Vladimir Nabokov and in particular to his 'novel' *Pale Fire*. The narrative structure of this book consists of a preface, a poem, the very long notes to the poem, and a postface; it is through moving from one to another of these parts that the plot emerges and the novel appears. In short, the *Vuillard* catalogue had to be honed down and made clear and comprehensible enough to satisfy art historians and art dealers, museum curators and collectors, able to be read both in quick bursts or by whole chapters at a time.

Of course, all parallel explanations, even over-interpretations, spring from my own studies, not necessarily from the archival documents. None of the latter suggested my comparisons between *The Suitor* and Émile Reynaud's film strips and between the *Natanson Album* and Wagner, nor my reading of the Zurich *Large Interior*, nor the link between the Nabi interiors and medieval illuminations, much less Vuillard's savage joy in caricature in his late portraits. This unambiguous, peripatetic, inclusive – and highly debatable – perspective on the artist is entirely my own. I have tried to give priority to the works I considered most important. Some readers may be disappointed to find that the works they possess have no commentary, but in general I have managed to make the context of one work (the sequence, the introduction, the other works) illuminate the rest as the reader goes from one to the other.

In addition to the fond memories I have of Daniel Wildenstein, who left us too soon without seeing the end result of all the studies he had set in motion, I must express my gratitude to his sons Alec and Guy, who are continuing his outstanding work in the same spirit, and to the staff of the Wildenstein Institute for their tireless efforts in the publication of the critical catalogue: Marie-Christine Maufus in particular guided the production of the book at arms' length, with the able assistance of Annie Champié, Élisabeth Raffy, responsible for the English edition, Perrine Wanecq, Marie Christine Decroocq, Laura Espagnon and Claude Jacir as well as the librarians Sophie Pietri, Anne Sohler and Amélie Naux, the photographer Fabrice Gousset, the computer technician Gabriel Gendre, Michèle Gaudin, and the New York team, Joseph Baillio, Ay-Whang Hsia and Eliot Rowlands. Next I wish to thank the young art historian Mathias Chivot, who was my assistant for six years and in the process became a



friend: without flagging he carried out a vast programme of documentary research in the libraries of Paris, not only organizing data but also going through all the texts I had asked him to put in order. He checked all the biographies, pictorial histories and lists of exhibitions, corrected the mistakes that had inevitably crept into the data sheets and completed them for the final years up to 2002. I should like to pay tribute here to his commitment, finesse and tireless work. It should be noted in parenthesis that the Vuillard retrospective to be shown in 2003 in four of the world's cultural capitals constituted an encouragement to finish the critical catalogue and to take stock of the current whereabouts of the main works of art appearing in it. It shows Vuillard as he has rarely been seen, and will help to present this fresh viewpoint on the artist. In addition to offering heartfelt thanks to the directors, curators, researchers and staff of the four museums concerned (the National Gallery of Art, Washington, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Musée d'Orsay, Paris and the Royal Academy of Art, London), I wish to express my affection and gratitude to Kimberley Jones, Laurence des Cars and Mary-Anne Stevens, the three other curators, each of whom has done wonders in bringing this project to a successful conclusion.

I should also like to acknowledge my debt to many people who provided valuable information and advice: Jean-Claude Bellier, Luc Bellier, Anisabelle Berès, Claire Denis, Marina Ducrey, Elizabeth Easton, Gloria Groom, the late Anne Gruson, Sabine Helms, Waring Hopkins, Paul and Ellen Josefowitz, William Kelly Simpson, Lulu Kléné, Sylvie Legrand, Isabelle Lemasne de Chermont, Jean-Michel Nectoux, Christian Neffe, Dominique Païni, Lionel Pissarro, Dominique de Font-Réaulx who created the inventory of the artist's 1,700 photographs, and Sandrine Nicollier who explored the recent bibliography.

Finally, my warmest thanks go to all those colleagues and friends who in various ways contributed towards making this catalogue a real tool for research:

Véronique Berecz, Brigitte Bitker-Ranson, Emmanuel Bréon, André Cariou, Isabelle Collet, René Convert, Marie Davaine, Frédéric Dassas, Louise Eliasof, Elisabeth de Farcy, Hélène Flon, Odile Fraigneau, Claire Frèches, Charles and Angela Hack, Mr. and Mrs. Spencer-Hayes, Vincente Madrigal, Christian Paty, Jean-Pierre Péliissier, Ursula Perucchi-Petri, Anne Pingeot, Marie-Hélène Poix, Katia Poletti, Anne Roquebert, Antoinette Romain, Marie-Anne Sarda, Jutta Usomo, Marie-Paul Vial and Alix Walsh.

*Ultima verba:* despite the Babylonian dimensions of this three-volume work, I never had any intention of saying everything, publishing everything or recording the artist's tiniest scribble. On the contrary, I have endeavoured to maintain a certain balance and harmony between the various parts of the book so as not to drown the reader in a sea of facts. This means that future investigators will still find unused letters, will be able to do further work in areas I have left unexplored, and may be surprised at my casual attitude to certain documents. There remain many seams to be mined, which may contradict my readings. So much the better. Édouard has not finished surprising us, and the future smiles on him.

\* January 10, 1987

Dear Daniel Wildenstein,

As you doubtless know from my son, I retired almost ten years ago, after that "apotheosis" at Durand-Ruel's and later at your house in London, which I still remember with infinite gratitude.

This is why I am writing to you: you probably remember that I spoke to your father about the project for a Vuillard catalogue which I had started in 1942 with the encouragement of K.-X. Roussel. With this in view I decided to bring in an expert whom I was going to recruit from the École Normale; the director had warmly recommended André Chastel, who had just returned from the prison camp. The times not being propitious, we had to interrupt our work after two years... and went back to it some years later, with Monique Schneider Maunoury whom I introduced to your father, and entrusted the task of carrying on the work to my son Antoine. Time has passed!... The reason for my letter is to ask you to what extent you might feel inclined to help me with the publication of this book, which for me represents a work of piety. I should like, if possible, to discuss it with you one of these days.

Jacques Salomon

P.S. My approach to you was based on the motto of William the Silent: "There is no need to hope in order to undertake, nor to succeed in order to persevere", which Vuillard quoted so often... and which Roussel summed up in the Latin word PERGE that he inscribed on the flyleaf of his books.



Music  
V.97.4 (detail)



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*Catalogue*



## I – The Genesis of a Respectable Young Man: The Reality Principle (1868-90)

*'One of those recluses who knows what's what.'*  
Edgar Degas

Like so many of the artists who chose to live in Paris and who, favouring a particular selection of neighbourhoods, squares, monuments and views, roamed obsessively through the capital, Vuillard was born in the provinces. He came into the world on 12 November 1868 in Cuiseaux, in the department of Saône-et-Loire. His father Honoré Vuillard (see ill.), a captain in the Marine Infantry, had been forced to retire after being seriously wounded in 1854 at the Battle of Dialmath, in Senegal – an event that in 1857 earned him the Légion d'Honneur. In 1862 he was appointed to the position of tax collector by the authorities of the Second Empire. Vuillard's mother, Marie Michaud, born in 1839 and described as having 'no profession', came from a family of textile manufacturers. Her mother, who figures in this catalogue as *'Grand-mère Michaud'*, was a professional dressmaker and milliner with an establishment at 18,

rue de Chabrol, in the 10th arrondissement. Mme Vuillard also worked as a dressmaker (although she was never officially registered as such),<sup>1</sup> and Vuillard's Uncle Saurel 'made designs for Cashmere shawls'.<sup>2</sup> This 'textile' environment undoubtedly influenced his later development. Édouard had an older sister, Marie (see ill.), born in 1861. It was she who taught him to read, and he called her by the pet name of Mimi. His older brother Alexandre (see ill.), born in 1863 and nicknamed Miquen, opted early for a military career. In this close-knit family all were prepared to make sacrifices to help the young artist (see ill.). Cuiseaux (see ill.) sits on the cliff that borders the Jura plateau, facing La Bresse. Honoré Vuillard was from the Jura, and many years later Romain Coolus attributed the painter's psychological nature to this fact: 'The men of this region are not voluble, not sensitive to eloquence; they do not live



E. V., Posthumous *Portrait of Honoré Vuillard, His Father*, c. 1886, graphite on paper, 27.4 x 21.3 cm. Private collection.



Portrait photograph of Marie Vuillard, photo Mayer, Paris. Private collection.



Portrait photograph of Alexandre Vuillard, photo Sereni, Mâcon. Private collection.



Portrait photograph of Édouard Vuillard, photo Piard. Private collection.





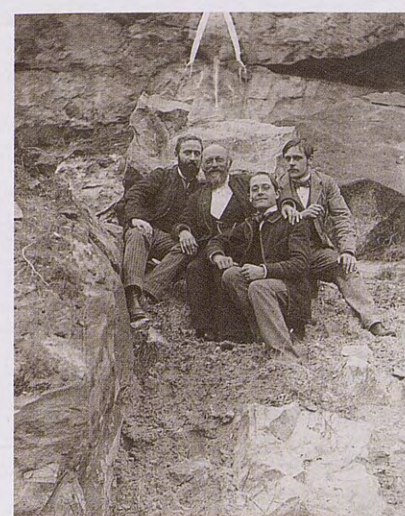
Colorized postcards of Cuisseaux, Vuillard's hometown. Private collection.

in the public square, and do not take the same noisy delight in arena sports or politics as southern populations ... nor do they have that deep-seated melancholy that clouds the Breton soul. As far removed from the petulant optimism of the former as from the resigned pessimism of the latter, they are simply disposed by heredity to consider life seriously, with thoughtful gravity, to weigh their judgements for some while before expressing them, and to improvise nothing in either their deeds or their works.<sup>3</sup> While hardly advocating a form of character analysis based exclusively on geographical origins<sup>4</sup> – encapsulated in Pericles' famous question: 'What is your deme?' – we have to admit that the picture Coolus draws is quite accurate. Like a certain quiet reserve, an absence of improvisation was one of the main features of Vuillard's art and genius. A few more words about his birth; the town hall certificate is absolutely clear: Édouard was born on 12 November 1868, despite the fact that most studies of the artist give the day before. This tradition could have begun with the Armistice of 1918, the temptation to celebrate his own birthday on the day that the whole of

France was celebrating victory over the Germans being simply too powerful to resist. Yet he was already noting his 'fortieth birthday' on 11 November 1908,<sup>5</sup> the day on which he penned his longest (and most accurate) autobiographical note. Most probably, his mother brought him into the world late in the day on the 11th and his father registered the birth on the 12th. In any case, for the last fifteen years of his life his journal entries for 11 November contain notes like 'my 66th birthday'<sup>6</sup> and '67 years old',<sup>7</sup> invariably followed by a reference to the Armistice. Vuillard evidently chose to see himself as a child of Victory.

While living in Cuisseaux Vuillard crossed paths several times with the revered Puvis de Chavannes, who would remain one of his strongest artistic influences. In a 1926 interview conducted with Vuillard, Puvis's son quotes the former's mother: 'I lived in Cuisseaux', she told me. 'I knew your family well; my son has admired Puvis de Chavannes for a very long time: at the Lycée Condorcet in Paris he made friends with Xavier Roussel and the spontaneity of that attachment sprang from the happy surprise felt by the two boys, both artists-to-be, at discovering that they shared the same devotion to the great Puvis ...'<sup>8</sup>

When Honoré Vuillard reached retirement age in 1877, the family moved to Paris, where they shared a home with the Michaud grandparents on rue de Chabrol, in the 10th arrondissement. Vuillard started attending the Rocroy-Saint-Léon school, run by the Marist brothers.<sup>9</sup> The following year, Honoré Vuillard purchased for his wife a corsetry business operated by Madame Duval-Caron at 20, rue Daunou, in the 2nd arrondissement. In 1879, Édouard entered the Lycée Condorcet, called at that time the Lycée Fontanes.<sup>10</sup> The reputation of the school – which only took day pupils – as one of the best in the country owed much to its remarkably liberal approach to teaching and discipline. Its teachers were renowned: Mallarmé and Bergson both taught there for a time. As a number of Vuillard's subsequently influential contemporaries later remarked, the Lycée Condorcet served as the melting pot for that generation of intellectuals and artists who wielded power in the reviews and salons of Paris during the 1890s. An invaluable article by Pierre Veber entitled 'Une génération', which appeared in *La Revue de France* in July and August of 1936, takes a retrospective look at this brilliant period.<sup>11</sup> The presence of Kerr-Xavier Roussel (see ill.), Maurice Denis, Lugné-Poe and Vuillard in the same institution at the same time is a miraculous coincidence virtually without precedent in



Vuillard and the Roussel family: father Xavier, and sons Henri and Kerr-Xavier, c. 1890, photograph. Private collection.



Portrait photograph of Kerr-Xavier Roussel, 1884, photo Cassin, Paris. Private collection.

the history of art. Student records from the Lycée Condorcet<sup>12</sup> indicate that by the time he was in the second form (1880-81) Vuillard had made friends to whom he would remain loyal until their deaths, among them Henri Colmet d'Âage, a future official in the Ministère des Colonies (I-89), the architect Frédéric Henry (II-15) and the musician Pierre Hermant.<sup>13</sup> From the start the young Édouard showed a marked interest in history and geography; Hermant, by contrast, was recorded as being 'thoughtless' and 'idle'. In what were considered at the time the most important classical subjects, French, Latin and Greek, Vuillard was judged by his teacher for 1881-82, Monsieur Bouillon, to be a 'very gentle and attentive child', and during the year's fourth term the master offered another comment that strikes us as entirely believable: 'his abilities are paralysed by shyness'. Kerr-Xavier Roussel (see ill.), the son of a well-known Parisian doctor, made his appearance the following year (1882-83), in the fourth form, along with Julien Magnin (I-91 and II-26), who would remain with Vuillard until the top form – the 'Rhetoric' class. Roussel, a brilliant dandy whose teachers considered him 'something of a dilettante, inconsistent and irregular', was to become Vuillard's very closest friend. In 'Rhetoric' (1884-85) Vuillard also met Pierre Veber, and it was during this year that his results improved and his teachers finally judged him an excellent student.

Vuillard's youthful drawings, which are still part of his studio archives, show a definite but not striking talent. He had not yet made the decision to become an artist and was actually seriously considering attending the Saint-Cyr academy and embarking on a military career, like his brother.

Most of his early drawings are stylistic exercises after plaster casts from the École des Beaux-Arts, nude studies full of the shading he would come only two or three years later to loathe ('it's art when it's in the round!' was a favourite catchphrase in the studios).<sup>14</sup> Other drawings (see ill.), although displaying a charming freshness and individuality, illustrate hackneyed subjects exploited frequently in the academic painting of the period. Their themes, as diverse as they are conventional, include *Zenobia Found on the Banks of the Araxes* (in 1850, the queen of Palmyra had earned a joint Prix de Rome for Bouguereau and Baudry – for a time a teacher much respected by Vuillard), *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, *The Abduction of Persephone* and *Tannhäuser in the Venusberg*. With the exception of the latter, these were all among the compulsory themes assigned to applicants to the École des Beaux-Arts and candidates for the Prix de Rome – a supreme distinction that would have thrilled his



E. V., *Zenobia Found on the Banks of the Araxes*, c. 1885-86, brush, pen and ink on paper, 17.5 x 23 cm. Private collection.



E. V., *The Abduction of Persephone*, c. 1885-86, graphite, wash and gouache on paper, 27.3 x 37 cm. Private collection.



mother. According to Jacques Salomon, Vuillard decided to abandon the idea of a military career while standing in front of a stationer's shop in the Passage du Havre, choosing instead to join Roussel, who had begun taking studio classes with Diogène Maillart.<sup>15</sup> After failing the École des Beaux-Arts entrance exam three times, Vuillard finally managed to scrape through on 21 July 1887.

One important aspect of these formative years (1886-89) is that they saw the development the young artist's marked inclination for the Old Masters of the Louvre, documented from the end of 1888 by drawings and telegraphic notes<sup>16</sup> in his Journal. Respect for the Old Masters was not that common at the École des Beaux-Arts, where the imitation of nature was at the time the unspoken rule. Paradoxically, naturalism did anything but encourage an in-depth study of the great artists of the past, and most of the school's aspiring painters contented themselves with slavishly copying the virtuoso 'tricks' of people like François Flameng and Fernand Cormon. Vuillard was soon shocked by the disconcerting ignorance of his fellow students on the quai Malaquais. His Journal entries for late 1888 and 1889, some of the choicest in this vast mnemonic enterprise, include references – in the form of isolated phrases or quick sketches – to artists as diverse as Perugino, Ingres, Rembrandt, Holbein, Terborch, Poussin, Le Sueur and Le Brun. The habit he developed during these years of visiting the Louvre almost daily remained with him for the rest of his life. During several periods he actually lived very close to the great museum – first between 1885 and 1887, when the family moved to 6, rue du Marché-Saint-Honoré, near the church of Saint-Roch, in the 1st *arrondissement*. After a longish spell at 10, rue de Miromesnil, in the 8th (1887-

91), Vuillard returned to the Saint-Honoré neighbourhood, which would be so closely linked to the Nabi period (1891-97). The apartment at 346, rue Saint-Honoré provided the backdrop for what are today the artist's most famous paintings. Between 1886 and 1888 he would regularly saunter along the banks of the Seine, cross the Tuileries, attend anatomy classes at the École de Médecine while memorizing the view from one of the world's three or four most beautiful bridges. His discovery of new realities, the broadening of his wide culture, his extraordinary intellectual curiosity – all were bound up with a hedonistic and enduring love of *strolling* through the city. It even affected the composition of his Journal. The pages for 1888 and 1889 consist of a highly original interweaving of text and drawing whose automatic writing conveys how different auditory and visual stimuli collided and combined in Vuillard's mind. His notebooks let us know where he went, whom he was seeing and occasionally on which paintings he was working. Clearly, like that of all great artists, Vuillard's writing reveals but also conceals the self, and a thorough knowledge of his painting is required to gain a full sense of the hopes and torments that haunted him. Jacques Salomon stated several times that Vuillard never showed his notebooks to anyone. Some pages of this long confession have the flavour of a Surrealist *cadavre exquis*. Others are stamped with a delicate humour, a permanent hallmark of his personality: on 21 November 1888, for example, he pictures himself comically slumped against a wall, accompanied by the caption 'gueule de bois' (see ill.).<sup>17</sup> On another page he brings together in the same space<sup>18</sup> a milliner's shop, his sister and *Grand-mère* Michaud, a carriage and a freely inspired sketch (see ill.) after Ghirlandajo's *Portrait of an Old Man with a*

*Young Boy* (which entered the Louvre's collections in 1886). The first book of his Journal offers many glimpses of Paris during the period when the buildings for the Universal Exhibition of 1889 were under construction. A number of entries (November-December 1888) – contained, like the others, in school exercise books – offer rough sketches of the Institut de France (to which he would be elected some fifty years later!), the Eiffel Tower (severely criticized from the start by a group of intellectuals led by Zola) rising steadily beside the old Palais du Trocadéro, and the piles of gravel so vital to the building process that dotted the banks of the Seine (see II-7, II-8, II-46). Most striking, though, are the repeated tenebrist experiments, explorations of the strange effects created by the glow of streetlamps over parks and monuments (see ill.). These effects undoubtedly played a role in his penchant for unusual lighting in the theatre sets he would later create for Lugné-Poe and the Théâtre de l'Œuvre. In fact, in the period from 1886 to 1889 there was little to indicate that he would become a Nabi. Sensible, discreet, sceptical (although still profoundly religious), everything about him spoke of reserve. Claude Roger-Marx captured this impression perfectly: '[A] face lit up with a look of extraordinary intensity, a peculiar anxious look directed inwards. It is a look that belied the fresh complexion of his twenty years. Whence came this precocious gravity which inspired all who approached him with such respect?'<sup>19</sup> During these years Vuillard produced a spate of oil sketches, drawings and small still lifes, almost impossible to date with precision, that are markedly similar to those Roussel was doing at the time (see ill.). These stylistic exercises inevitably recall the delicate smoothness of Chardin, but also bring to mind certain nineteenth-century painters, such as Théodule Ribot and Rixens, of whom the young artist was a great admirer. Traces of the influence of Jules Bastien-Lepage, Jean-François Raffaelli and even Gustave Courbet were still evident around 1887 and 1888, but what is most striking about Vuillard's earliest work is his precocious flair for portraiture. His most inspired youthful works are actually his self-portraits: they seem to capture his presence only fleetingly, and he gazes out of the frame at us with a look of indefinable anxiety, oddly combined with a certain assurance. He appears serious, taciturn – with a resemblance, as Jan Verkade put it, to a modern-day St. François des Sales.

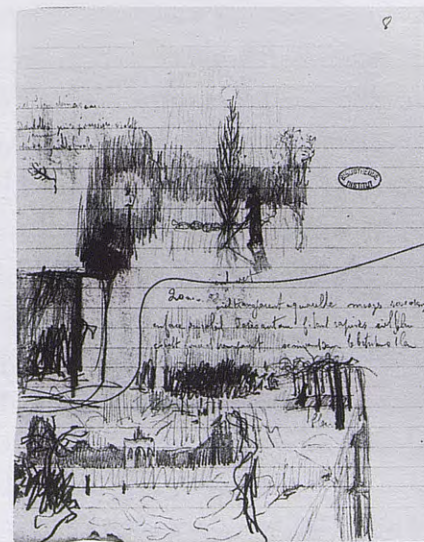
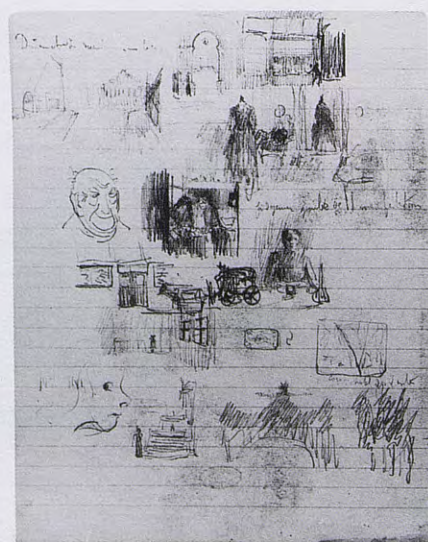
The self-portraits made before 1890 are the only 'masterpieces' from his youthful period and, indeed, the only great



Kerr-Xavier Roussel, *Still Life with Pipe*, oil on canvas, 1887. Private collection.

paintings to be produced by any of the future Nabis. While obviously linked to an exploration of his inner self, the study of his own physical appearance had another essential component: like many young people, Vuillard was not at ease with himself; we sense that he was self-conscious<sup>20</sup> and he considered himself too short. His physical complexes were, moreover, aggravated by financial difficulties.<sup>21</sup> Yet he was surrounded by pleasant, boisterous friends who were both handsome and rich: Colmet d'Âge, Magnin and, above all, Kerr-Xavier Roussel, then extrovert and attractive,<sup>22</sup> who exerted an absolute fascination over the painter. Vuillard's early self-portraiture, sometimes reminiscent of Degas, also recalls a similar exploration conducted by the young Odilon Redon in the 1860s.

Though they were two years apart, Maurice Denis was undoubtedly the first of the future Nabis that Vuillard had met at the Lycée Condorcet in 1885-86. Already at fifteen an avid reader of Spencer and Plotinus, Denis was drawn much earlier than Vuillard to the new theories on painting. Jacques Salomon recounts: 'One day, he [Maurice Denis] invited Vuillard to pay him a visit at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. He showed him his work, and on leaving Vuillard declared to his friend Roussel: "What a spirited chap ... and what odd painting he does!"'<sup>23</sup> At this period Vuillard, still preoccupied with the precise rendering of detail and the psychological aspects of portraiture, had not yet begun to use flat colours or outlined volumes, and his painting resisted strictly codified theories. He must have hesitated for some time before joining forces with the Nabis. Of the



E. V., Journal, 21 November 1888, I.I, fol. 10r.

E. V., Journal, 2 December 1888, I.I, fol. 20v.

E. V., Journal, November 1888, I.I, fol. 8r.





Vuillard at the age of nineteen in the studio of painter Tony Robert-Fleury, Académie Julian, photograph (detail), 1887. Private collection.

various factors that pushed him towards their circle, however, one was fundamental: increasingly suffocated by the mediocrity surrounding him, both at the École des Beaux-Arts and the studios of Julian and Maillart (see ill.), he was attracted by the group's intellectual aspirations. Vuillard, a product of the intellectually rigorous Lycée Condorcet system, undoubtedly felt more sympathy for their devotion to Swedenborg, Péladan and Baudelaire than either Émile Bernard's *bretonneries* or Sérusier's 'sacred proportions'.<sup>24</sup> He was, from the outset, a painter for whom *cerebral construction* prevailed over the pleasure of composition.

It would have been fascinating to read in Vuillard's youthful Journal about Gauguin, Manet, more on Puvis, the Impressionists – especially about Seurat, the star of 1888 and 1889. But no. He speaks simply and modestly of those who remained his friends after leaving the Lycée: Colmet d'Âage, Julien Magnin, Frédéric Henry, Pierre Veber. Another figure seems to have exerted a good deal of influence over the young painter. This was the artist Marc Mouclier, a native of the Charente. A colourful, swaggering figure who, like Vuillard, had a predilection for the Old Masters of the Louvre, he has fallen today into complete obscurity. Vuil-

lard corresponded with him regularly until around 1892 or 1893, and did not entirely lose touch with him after that. Mouclier gravitated around the Nabi group for a brief period, even showing his work alongside theirs at the early Le Barc de Bouteville exhibitions. His paintings do not leave us with the impression that he was a great artist, and the catalogue of an exhibition of his work held in 1935 confirms it: full of aphorisms of his own invention,<sup>25</sup> it constitutes a graphic illustration of how a promising artistic debut can come to nothing. But Vuillard was never one to scorn others, and his loyalty to the past was one of his most enduring character traits.

In the years between 1885 and 1889 Vuillard travelled little. Paris sufficed – and his financial situation hardly allowed it. Even a simple visit to his hometown was beyond his means: '(1886) Trip to Cuiseaux, courtesy of Aunt Saurel'.<sup>26</sup> A short spell of compulsory military service in Lisieux (9 November–21 December 1889) gave him a glimpse of Normandy, but it seems certain that he never went to Pont-Aven to join the community of artists surrounding Gauguin.<sup>27</sup>

By way of conclusion, a few words about his family. At the time of his father's death in 1884, Vuillard's life was divided between his studies, his exploration of the art of the past and his mother's dressmaking workshop, in which three generations of women worked side by side. From the age of about fifteen or sixteen, Vuillard was enveloped in a world of ribbons and trim, satin and chintz, spools and skeins, where forms appeared and disappeared before his eyes. In spite of his brother's frequent absences, he made no attempt to exercise any male authority, leaving the running of the household entirely to the three women with whom he lived and whose hard work enabled him to pursue his studies. Of all the future Nabis, Vuillard (along with Denis) came from the least affluent background.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, his mother, who had possibly hoped he would follow his brother into the army, encouraged his desire to become an artist 'since it's his choice'. Pierre Veber left us an unforgettable description of Vuillard's mother: 'He was the third child of an admirable mother, who made her living from a women's clothing business operating out of a dark mezzanine on rue du Marché-Saint-Honoré. We went there often to see our friend, and we felt for Madame Vuillard an almost filial affection. She was a figure of extraordinary purity and nobility. Her tenderness toward our friend was marvellous. She believed in his mission and devoted herself to it with exem-

plary confidence and self-denial. It is because of her that Édouard Vuillard became the perfect artist that he is, and also the man whose loyal intelligence and open, frank nature won our friendship. It was from her that this powerful artist inherited the extraordinary modesty he invariably displays, even in the face of un hoped-for success'.<sup>29</sup>

As he prepared to do battle with the Parisian art world, Vuillard could muster far from negligible arms: a broad knowledge of literature and art, the urge to succeed, friends who would introduce him to the inner circles of the avant-garde, and a family who offered love and support. Few artists can boast such auspicious beginnings.

<sup>1</sup> See Elizabeth Easton's extremely detailed study of this question; Easton 1989, pp. 27–29.

<sup>2</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Coolus 1934, p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> Coolus should have remembered that Gustave Courbet, whose roots were also in the Jura, presented a psychological profile that was the very antithesis of Vuillard's: self-confident, extrovert, boastful, political, constantly in the public eye.

<sup>5</sup> E. V., Journal, II.2, fol. 12r–16v.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 11 November 1934, IV.8, fol. 6v.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 11 November 1935, IV.9, fol. 22r.

<sup>8</sup> Puvis de Chavannes 1926, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> The Marists are renowned for their relatively liberal teaching methods, in which theatre plays an important part. In Cuiseaux Vuillard had been a pupil at a school run by the teaching branch of the Society of Mary. It was undoubtedly they who recommended the Rocroy school to his parents.

<sup>10</sup> The institution had previously been known as the 'Collège Bourbon' and the 'Lycée Bonaparte'.

<sup>11</sup> It tells us, for instance, that Lugné-Poe and Denis were fellow Condorcet pupils from the start, along with Paul Bernard (the future Tristan Bernard, who would accompany Vuillard on all his country sojourns from 1900 to 1914).

<sup>12</sup> Our thanks to Mrs Usumo, in charge of the Lycée Condorcet archives for this information.

<sup>13</sup> Not to be confused with his brother, Abel Hermant, a writer convicted of collaboration in 1945 (see Alexandre 1998, p. 64). Pierre Hermant composed a number of symphonic poems – among them *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret* (1889) and *La Reine de Saba* (1903) – together with a large body of chamber music. In Maurice Denis's fine painting *Princess Maleine's Minuet* (1891), the sheet music on the piano is supposed to be by Hermant. He never achieved success, but we know from fragmentary notes in the Salomon Archives that he presented his quartet in C major at the Salle Erard, to an audience that included the Vuillards, the Roussels and Alfred Natan-son and his daughters on 15 February 1910 ('one of the most important dates of my life').

<sup>14</sup> Denis 1913, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Salomon 1967, p. 42.

<sup>16</sup> In his autobiographical notes he recalls: 'November 85 leave Condorcet / rue du Marché-Saint-Honoré / hang around the Louvre / fail entrance to the École twice in 86'; Journal, 11 November 1908, II.2, fol. 12r.

<sup>17</sup> The French for 'hangover'. Ibid., I.1., fol. 10r.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 2 December 1888, I.1, fol. 20v.

<sup>19</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> In a Journal entry made a few years later (15 July 1894, I.2, fol. 43r.), he concludes after examining himself in the mirror that he has 'a slightly greasy forehead' and 'thin, uneven hair'; see no. II-1.

<sup>21</sup> On 28 November 1888 he notes: 'Mad dash to the Cirque Fernando / Veber pays, dumb fear on my part' (Journal, I.1, fol. 17r.). And a few days later: 'Mama annoyed I ask her for 15 sous for a tube of white' (13 December 1888, I.1, fol. 31v.).

<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Kerr-Xavier's disturbing good looks lasted for some time. Jacques Salomon reports: 'I can still hear Lucy Hessel whispering in my ear when, as occasionally happened, he appeared among the guests: don't you think he's handsome!'; Salomon 1967, p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Salomon 1945, p. 19.

<sup>24</sup> On Sérusier's return from Prague, where he had met Desiderius Lenz (1895), he enthusiastically explained Lenz's notion of 'sacred proportions' to his comrades: 'Vuillard, Bonnard and Roussel were not interested.' We cannot blame them; Sérusier 1950, p. 70.

<sup>25</sup> For example, 'When a person of note dies, a whole retinue collapses', and 'It is not that Woman is depraved but that, like the cat, she courts depravity'; exhibition catalogue *Marc Mouclier*, Paris, 1935, pp. 39, 40.

<sup>26</sup> E. V., Journal, 11 and 12 November 1908, II.2, fol. 12r–16v.

<sup>27</sup> See no. II-9.

<sup>28</sup> Both Vuillard and Denis attended the Lycée Condorcet on State scholarships.

<sup>29</sup> Veber 1938, p. 6.





I-1

### I-1 Still Life with a Bowl of Salad

1887-88  
Oil on canvas, 46 x 65 cm  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1977-382

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – M. et Mme Kerr-Xavier Roussel, L'Étang-la-Ville (France) – Donated by Roussel to the French State, 1941; deposited with the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; transferred to the Musée du Louvre (Palais de Tokyo), Paris, 1977; transferred to the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, in 1986.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Orangerie, 1941-42, no. 46 – Liège-Ghent-Luxembourg, 1948, no. 17 (ill.) – London, Wildenstein, June 1948, no. 1 (ill.) – Angers, Beaux-Arts, 1967, no. 79.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 46 – Cassou, Dorival, Homolle 1947, no. 33 – Cassou, Dorival, Homolle 1954, p. 163 – Dorival 1957, p. 21 – Compin, Roquebert 1986, p. 282 (ill.) – Thomson 1988, pp. 12-14, 16, col. fig. 5 – Rosenblum 1989, p. 607 (col. ill.) – Compin, Lacambre, Roquebert 1990, p. 478 (ill.) – Forgione 1992, p. 95, fig. 49 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 16 (col. ill.), 17.

**Description:** Executed in a muted pinkish-grey enlivened by the blue-green salad leaves and the warm tones of the oil and vinegar in the cruet. (JS)

Claude Roger-Marx is unrivalled as a commentator on Vuillard's early still lifes: 'True, his *Still life with a Bowl of Salad* suffers from a certain overcrowding; a guiding rhythm is lacking from this culinary battlefield on which an army of knives is deployed and where an

untouched camembert awaits its moment of glory alongside a carafe, a stack of plates and a bottle. Nevertheless, the objects seem to preside over some family feast, some informal ritual. We sense that the guests will not be noisy; the light is hardly that of an orgy; only faint shadows fall across the tablecloth, and a few leaves in a salad bowl alone endow this symphony with a vivid touch.'

### I-2 Still Life with Cabbage

1887-88  
Oil on canvas, 46 x 65 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown



I-2

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Nate B. Spingold, New York, 1951 – Spingold sale, Sotheby's, London, 29 Nov. 1976, lot 12 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 28 – Vienna, Institut Français, 1949, no. 47 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 30 (ill.), 100 – New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, June 1960 – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 2 (ill.) – New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1967, no. 111.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 45 – Ritchie 1954, p. 10 – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 6 – Thomson 1988, pp. 12, 16.

**Description:** The objects are grouped together on this brightly lit kitchen table in a somewhat conventional manner. Our gaze is drawn to a small dish at the centre containing a herring lit by slices of pale red carrot that make it a feast for the eye. The warm shadow cast by the handsome blue skimming-ladle, the pink of the wooden spoon, the lemons, the crust of bread, the knife, even the two sprigs of parsley to the right of the composition testify to the delicacy, sincerity and scrupulousness with which the young Vuillard observed whatever presented itself to his gaze. (JS)

### I-3 Sideboard with Cauliflower

1887-88  
Oil on canvas, 20 x 25 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 2.



I-3

**Description:** A vase, a glass and a green-and-white cauliflower on a yellow table. Crockery on the left. Grey and yellow background. An exercise in the tonal values of greys and whites. (AC)

### I-4 Glass of Water and a Lemon

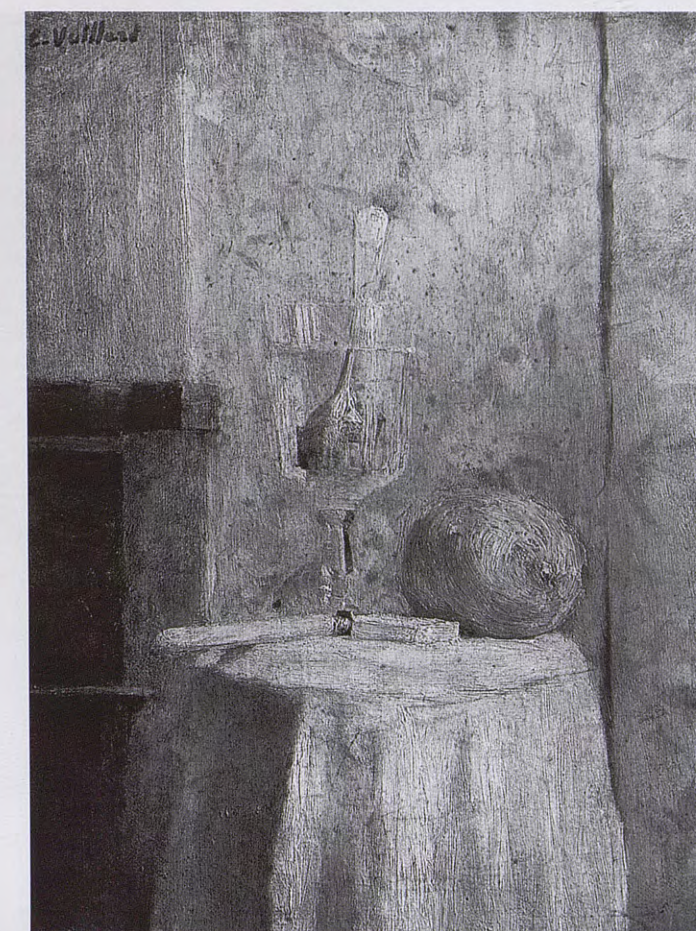
1887-88  
Oil on canvas, 35 x 28 cm  
Signed, upper left: E. Vuillard  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, Paris – Arthur Sachs, Paris, c. 1950 – Arthur Sachs and Marian François-Poncet, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 28 Nov. 1973, lot 17 (col. ill.), bought in – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 1 – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 58 – London, Wildenstein, June 1948, no. 5 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 7; 1951-52, no. 214 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1953, no. 66 [*Nature morte, verre et citron*] – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 54 – Paris, Jacquemart-André, 1961, no. 114 – Paris, Orangerie, 1966, no. 54 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 6 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 5 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 45-46; 1948c, p. 10 – Sterling 1952, p. 91, pl. 104 – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 6 – Georges 1982, p. 37.

**Description:** A white cloth draped over a small table, with a bright yellow lemon, a lump of sugar and a knife with a gleaming handle beside a wine-glass filled with water in which a spoon is standing. The background curtain is a bluish grey. (JS)



I-4

### I-5 Two Oranges and a Wine- Glass

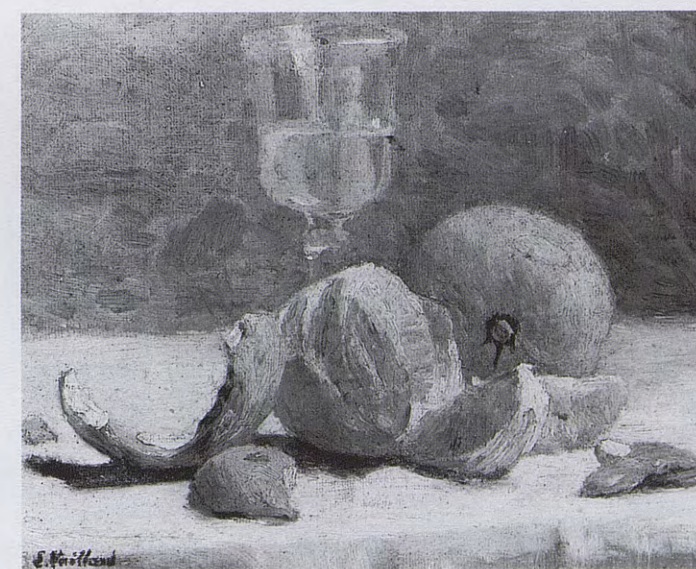
1887-88  
Oil on canvas, 18.5 x 23.5 cm  
Signed, lower left: E. Vuillard  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alfred Daber, Paris – Edward J. Robinson, Los Angeles – Stavros S. Niarchos, Greece – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, June-July, 1941 – New York-Washington D.C., 1953, no. 38 – Los Angeles-San Francisco, 1956-57, no. 70.

**Bibliography:** Jalard 1966, p. 203 (ill.).

**Description:** One orange is untouched, the other peeled and opened. A wine-glass at the centre. A white tablecloth. (JS)



I-5



## I-6 Cup and Mandarin

1887-88  
Oil on canvas, 19 × 25.1 cm  
Signed, upper left: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alfred Daber, Paris, 1941 – Lefevre, London, c. 1985 – William Kelly Simpson, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 4 – Paris, Daber, 1947 – Katonah, Katonah Gallery, 1989, no. 1 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 45; 1968, p. 6.



I-6



I-7

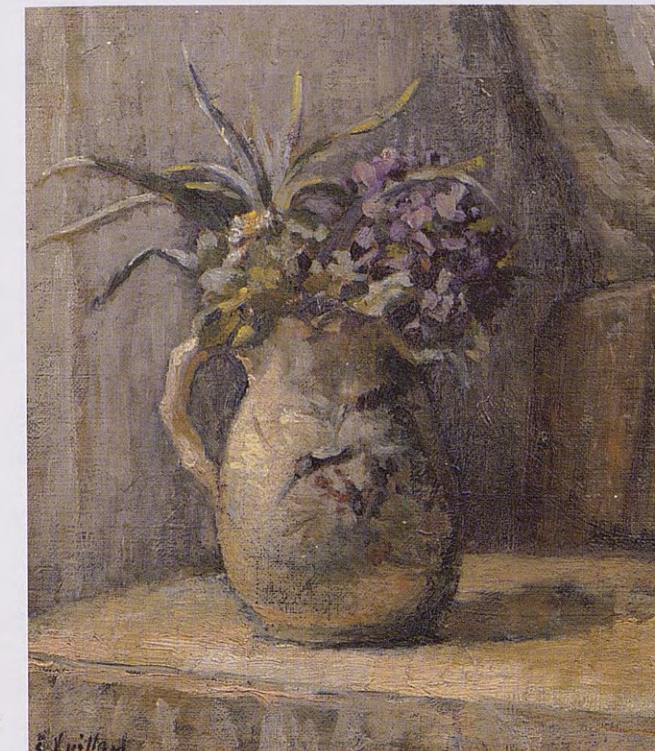
## I-7 Sugar Bowl and Matches

1887-88  
Oil on canvas, 18 × 25.5 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris, c. 1937 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1937, no. 200; 1938, no. 12.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 46.



I-8

## I-8 Violets and Daffodils in a Jug

1887-88  
Oil on canvas, 22.5 × 19 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris, c. 1938 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1931, no. 63 – Paris, Druet, 1933, no. 49 – London, Tooth & Sons, 1934, no. 28 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 11.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 45; 1948c, p. 10; 1968, p. 6.

## I-9 Jar of Gherkins

1887-88  
Oil on cardboard, 35 × 27 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Inscribed on rear: 1887  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Charpentier, 1951-52, no. 217.



I-9

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 45; 1968, p. 6.

**Description:** A sealed jar between two halves of lemon on a table covered with a white cloth. Pink and grey background of great delicacy. Green gherkins mingle with red peppers at the top of the jar. (JS)

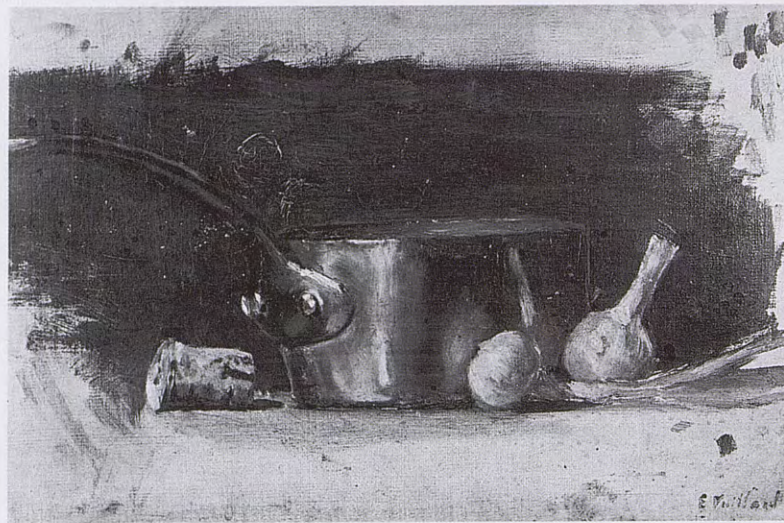
The delicate shimmer of the pigment here is similar to that of *Self-portrait in a Mirror* (I-77). One thinks of Chardin and his celebrated *Jar of Olives*,<sup>1</sup> which so delighted Diderot at the Salon of 1763: 'One understands nothing of this magic. It consists of thick layers of colour applied one on top of the other, the effect of which appears from the bottom upwards. At other times, it is as though a spray had been blown across the canvas; elsewhere, a light foam thrown over

it.<sup>2</sup> On the back of the composition, Vuillard has painted in the centre of the board the neck of a wine-bottle stopped with a cork.

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Siméon. Chardin, *Jar of Olives*, oil on canvas, 1760, 71 × 98 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Chardin*, exhib. cat., Paris, Grand Palais, 1999, p. 288.





I-10

# I-10 Saucepan and Onions

1888  
Oil on canvas, 21 × 32 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, Milan (Italy)

Provenance: Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection, Milan, c. 1960.

Exhibitions: Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 20 – Stockholm, Galerie d'Art Latin, 1948, no. 1 [*Casserole et Oignons*, 1892] – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 39 – London, Marlborough, 1954, no. 61 – Rotterdam, Boijmans van Beuningen, 1954, no. 123 – Paris, Berès, May 1957, no. 59 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 4.

Description: A copper saucepan in which two onions are reflected, against a dark background. To the left is a cork. The white canvas has been left unpainted in places. (JS)



I-12

# I-11 Billy-Can and Onions

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 22.2 × 27 cm  
Signed upper right: *Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

Provenance: Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Sam Salz, New York – Ralph F. Colin, New York, 1955 – Current whereabouts unknown.

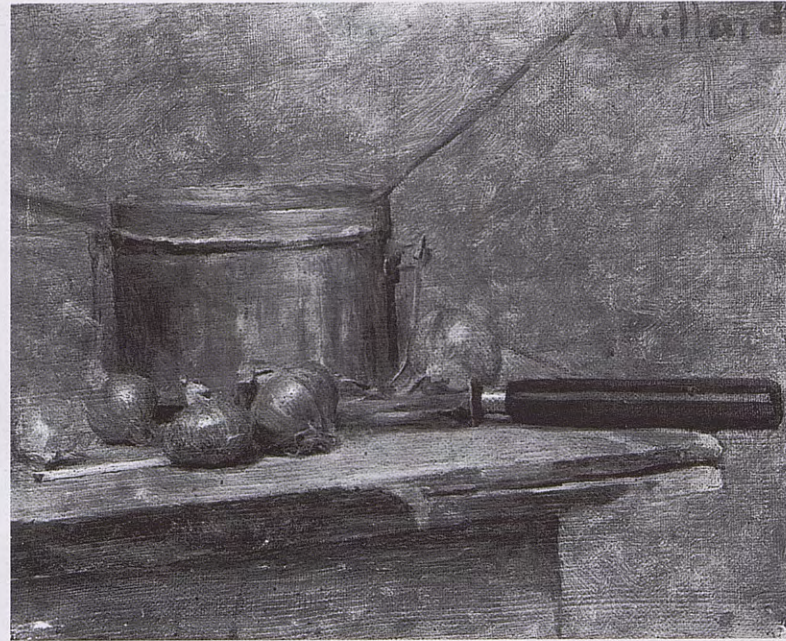
Exhibition: New York, Knoedler, 1960, no. 8 (ill.).

Description: To the right is a knife with a black handle; to the left, a spent match. (JS)

# I-12 Hot-Water Jug and Potatoes

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 20.3 × 24.7 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Art market, New York

Provenance: Artist's studio – Bela Hein, Paris – M. Knoedler, New York, 1953 – Alfred J. Vanderbilt, United States, 1954 – Richard L. Feigen, New York, c. 1988 – Lafayette Parke Gallery, New York.



I-11

# I-13 Still Life with Hot-Water Jug

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 19 × 26 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

Provenance: Artist's studio – Nathan, Zurich (Switzerland), c. 1979 – Current whereabouts unknown.

Description: A yellow table with a grey-green knife and a few onions and pink carrots beside a hot-water jug, the left side of which is bathed in light and highlighted in white. Reddish-brown background. (AC)



I-13



I-14

# I-14 Pewter Jug and Vegetables

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 30.5 × 39.4 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (Illinois), 1988.263

Provenance: Artist's studio – Alfred Daber, Paris, 1941 – M. Lambert, Paris – Jacques Dubourg, Paris, c. 1971 – E. V. Thaw, New York, c. 1979 – Mary and Leigh Block, Chicago – Donation by Mary and Leigh Block to the Art Institute of Chicago, 1988.

Exhibition: Paris, Daber, 1947.

Bibliography: Groom 1993, p. 6, col. fig. 5.



## I-15

## Wild Rabbit

c. 1888

Oil on canvas, 41 × 32.5 cm

Signed upper right: *E. Vuillard*

Private collection, Paris

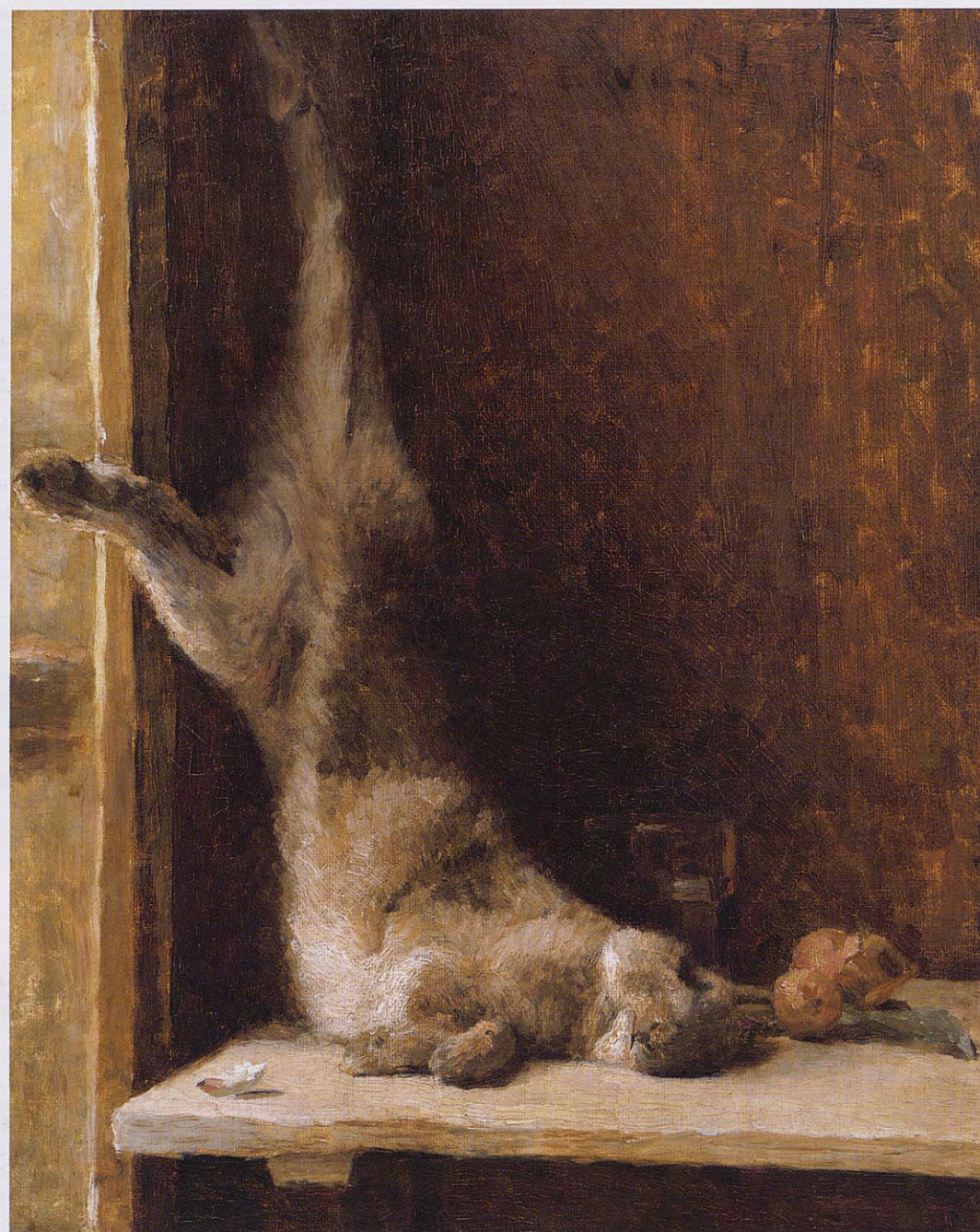
**Provenance:** Roger Marx, Paris; Claude Roger-Marx, Paris; Mme René Asselain (née Roger-Marx), Paris – Galerie Schmit, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 10 – Paris, Daber, 1947 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 40 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 3 – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 4 – Paris, Schmit, 1982, no. 105 (col. ill.); 1986, no. 64 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 1 (ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-2001, no. 3, p. 80 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 45-46, 79; 1948c, pp. 10-11; 1968, pp. 6-8 – Georges 1982, p. 37 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 17 (ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, p. 17.

**Description:** *The rabbit hangs by one leg, its head resting on a pale-coloured shelf before a glass of wine and two sprouting onions. Daylight coming in through a window on the left partly illuminates its beige fur and colours the wall russet, which otherwise remains brown in the shade.* (JS)

In his formative years as a student at the Beaux-Arts in Paris, Vuillard would have been able to admire Chardin's *Dead Hare with Game-Bag and Powder-Flask* (see ill.), acquired by the Louvre in 1852. Here, the animal's fur is skilfully rendered by a flurry of tiny, criss-cross brush-strokes.



I-15

## I-16

## Apples and a Glass of Wine

c. 1888

Oil on canvas, 20.5 × 39 cm

Stamp I, upper right

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection – Kunsthandel Wolfgang Werner, Bremen/Berlin – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 11 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 34 (ill.) – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, (not in cat.) – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 41 – Paris, Charpentier, 1951-52, no. 216 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 100 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 2 (ill.) – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 2 (ill.) – Paris, Grand Palais, 1971, no. 107 (ill.) – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1973, no. 1 – Brussels, Musées Royaux, 1975, no. 24 (col. ill.) – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 2 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 2, p. 58 (ill.).



Jean-Baptiste Siméon Chardin,  
*Dead Hare with Game-Bag and Powder-Flask*, c. 1728, oil on canvas,  
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1945, p. 136 (ill.); 1961, p. 22 (col. ill.); 1968, p. 40 (col. ill.) – Mauner 1978, p. 209, fig. 54 – Georges 1982, p. 37 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 17 (ill.).

**Description:** *A half-empty glass of wine, a knife and a cast-iron stewing-pan amid a scattering of apples on an ochre-coloured table. Green background, shading into blue on the left.* (JS)

## I-17

## Overtaken Egg-Cup

c. 1888

Oil on canvas, 12.1 × 21.3 cm

Stamp I, lower right

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Donald and Jean Stralem Collection, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 10 May 1995, lot 214 (col. ill.) – Galerie Hopkins-Custot – Vicente Madrigal collection, New York.

**Description:** *An egg-cup with glints of blue lies overturned on a shelf next to a bouquet of bay-leaves. Dark brown background.* (AC)



I-16

## I-18

## Hazelnuts and Nutcracker

c. 1888

Oil on canvas, 13.5 × 22.5 cm

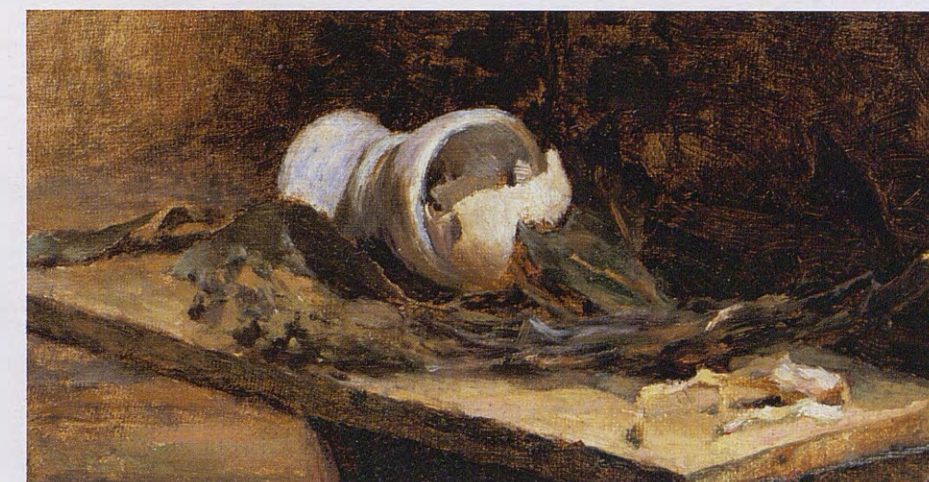
Stamp I, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alfred Daber, Paris, c. 1954 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Daber, 1954, no. 25; 1959, no. 39.

**Description:** *A play of greens and browns around the gleaming nodules of the nut-cracker.* (AC)



I-17

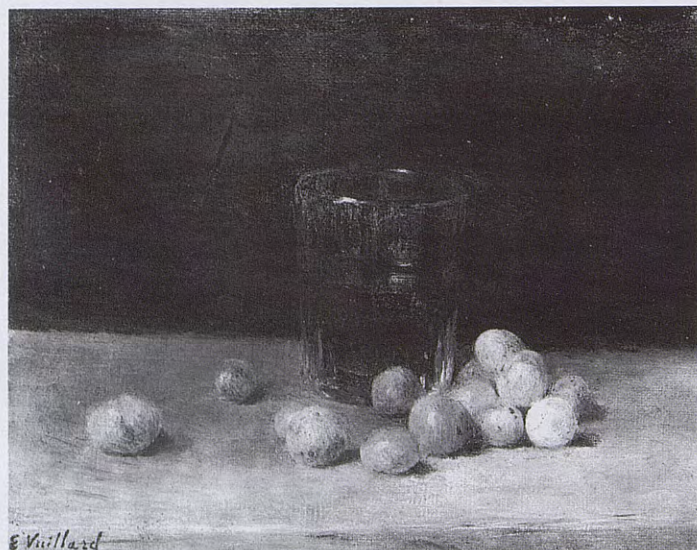


I-18





I-19



I-20



I-21

## I-19 Cherry-Plums

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 19 × 24 cm  
Signed, upper left: *Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Description:** *A yellow table with a half-filled glass of wine in the centre. The fruit on the right is brightly lit. Dark brown background. (JS)*

## I-20 Still Life with Cherry-Plums

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 18.5 × 14.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, c. 1949 – Louis Bonn, Paris – Sam Salz, New York, c. 1979 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 3.

## I-21 Glass with a Piece of Cheese

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 16 × 26 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Joseph E. Levine, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 14 May 1998, lot 404 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 3.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 45; 1946b, p. 68 (ill.).

**Description:** *A glass with a drop of red wine still left in it and a knife with a gleaming ivory handle on a grey marble table. To the left is a piece of cheese, rendered in an assortment of pinks, blues and greens. (AC)*

## I-22 Jam Pot

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 17.5 × 23.5 cm  
Stamp 1, upper left  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London – Galerie Berès, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, April-June 1954, no. 22 – Saint-Étienne, Musée d'Art et d'Industrie, 1955, no. 33 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 3 (ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 2 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 2 – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 3 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *A dark-hued jam pot with a gleaming silver spoon and a piece of bread executed with great gusto against a warm, dark background. (AC)*



I-22



I-23

## I-23 Still Life with Jam Pot

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 15 × 25.2 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Girard, Paris – Martin Fabiani, Paris – Knoedler, New York – Paul Mellon, Upperville (Virginia) – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1966, no. 170 (ill.).

## I-24 Fried Egg

c. 1888 (?)  
Pastel on paper, 31.5 × 44.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Charles Slatkin, New York – Galerie Motte sale, Geneva, 1 July 1971, lot 76 (ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Geneva-Zurich, 1950, no. 7.

**Description:** *On a yellow plate, an enamelled dish reddish-brown on the outside with a large spoon emphasized by a narrow band of light resting in it. The shadow of the dish is a strong green. Grey background. (JS)*



I-24





I-25

# I-25 Still Life with Paraffin Lamp

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 15.5 × 17 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79, no. 4; 1981-82, no. 56 (col. ill.) – London, JPL, 1985, no. 1 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A green table with a brass oil lamp, a large grey key and two matchsticks with bright red sulphur tips. Vivid highlights. Reddish-brown and green background. (JS)



I-26

# I-26 The Ink-Bottle

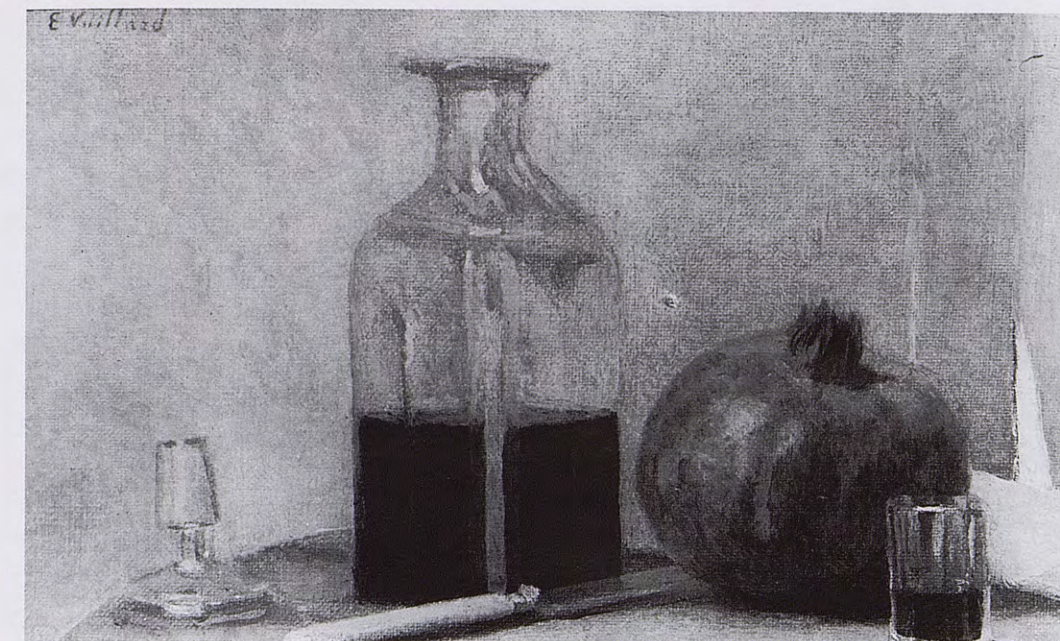
c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 13 × 19.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection – Galerie Berès, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Berès, May 1957, no. 61 – Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 1 (col. ill.) – Stuttgart, Kunsthauß Bühler, 1996, p. 11 (col. ill.) – St. Tropez, 2000, no. 1, p. 79 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 50.

**Description:** The label on the ink-bottle is blue. In front of it stands a dazzling vermillion stub of sealing wax next to a mauve reflection on the surface of the table. Orange-brown background. (AC)



I-27

# I-27 Still Life with Pomegranate

1888  
Oil on canvas, 21.5 × 31.5 cm  
Stamp 1, upper left  
Current whereabouts unknown

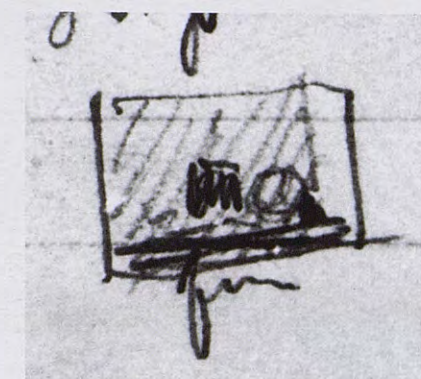
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alfred Daber, Paris – Marlborough Fine Art, London – Knoedler, New York – Charles Francis, United States, c. 1959 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 33 – Paris, Daber, 1947.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 34 (ill.).



E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 11v. (22 Nov. 1888).



E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 14r. (26 Nov. 1888).

In his Journal, Vuillard notes that he began his *Still Life with Pomegranate* on 22 November 1888, and on 26 November he draws it a second time (see ill.), adding the word 'fin' ('end').



I-28

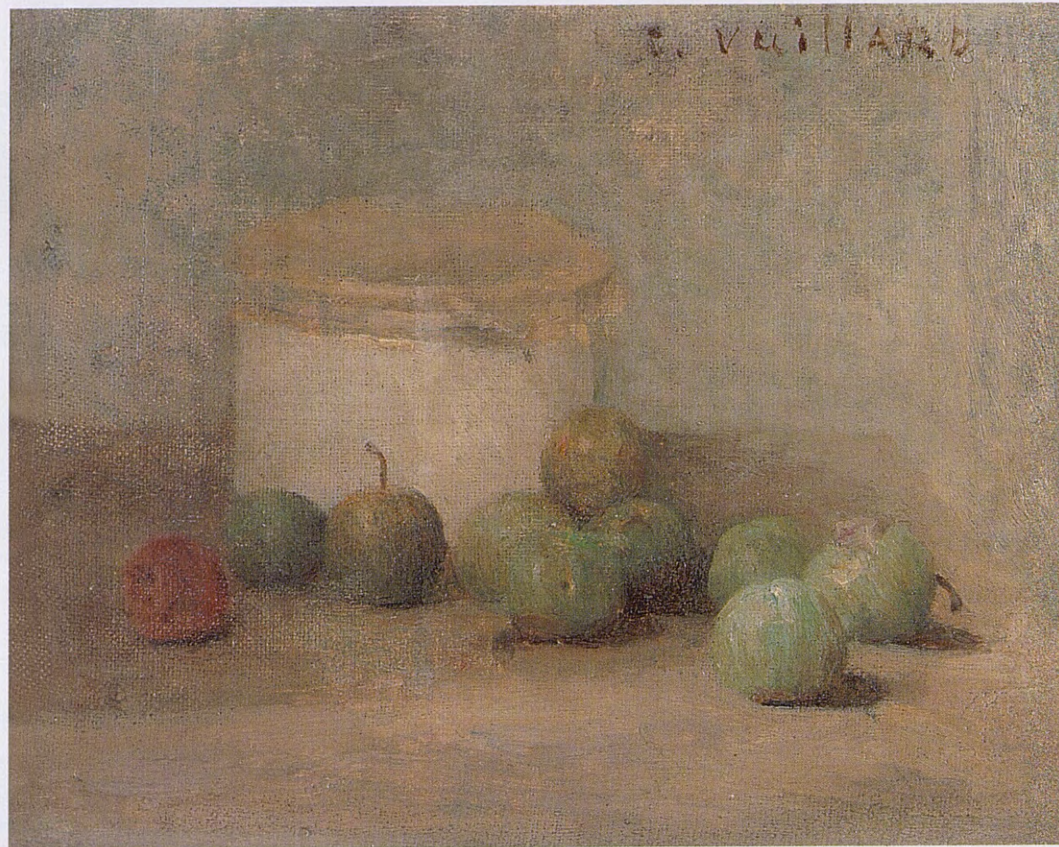
# I-28 Decanter and Four Peaches

1888  
Oil on canvas, 23 × 28 cm  
Signed upper left: Vuillard  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hallsborough, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 10 Dec. 1969, lot 51 (col. ill.) – Spencer Samuels, New York – Fletcher Jones, Los Angeles – Jones sale, Christie's, London, 2 Dec. 1975, lot 32 (ill.) – Lady Baillie, London; on loan from 1977 to 1988 at Leeds Castle (Great Britain) – British Rail Pension Fund sale, Sotheby's, London, 4 April 1989, lot 21 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** To right of centre, a square-shaped decanter containing a half-glass or so of wine. The lights on the crystal have subtle hints of pink that harmonize with the plain, pale-green background. (JS)





I-29

### I-29 Greengages

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 19 × 24.2 cm  
Signed, upper right: *E. Vuillard*  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – William S. Paley, United States – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 2 Oct. 1991, lot 30 (col. ill.) – Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 45.

**Description:** *Nine greengages arranged in groups of three before a white earthenware pot. (JS)*



I-30

### I-30 Plums

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 24 × 33 cm  
Stamp I, upper right  
Private collection, Berne

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Berne.

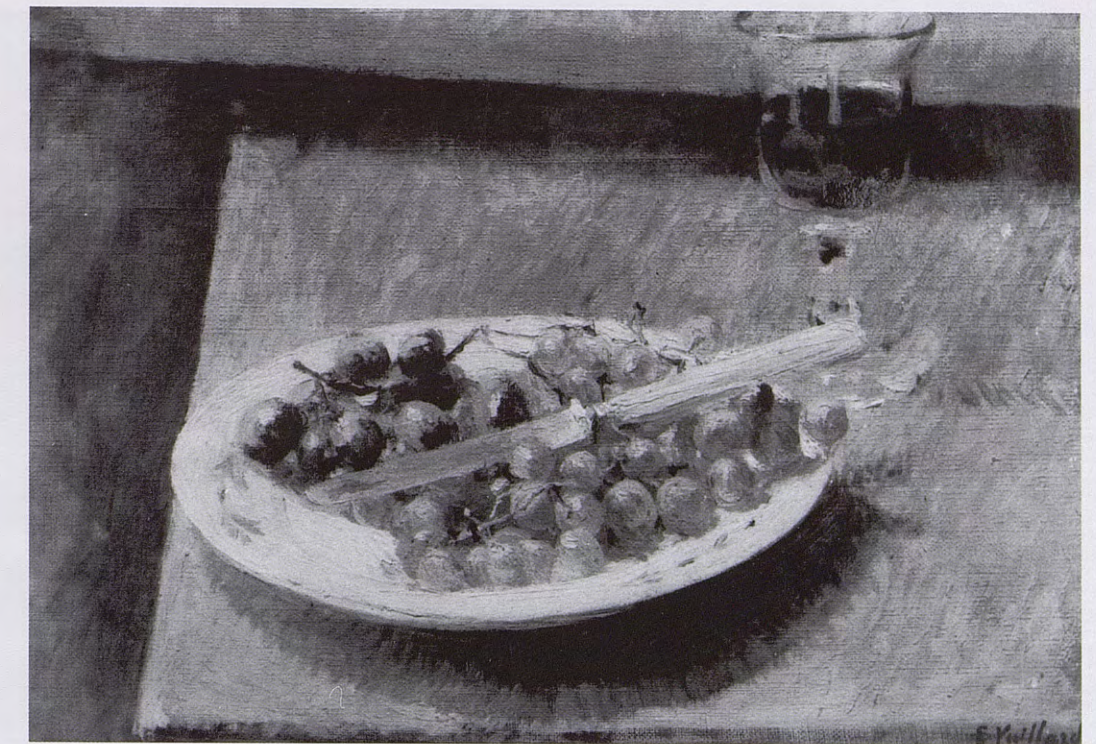
**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79, no. 5 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *Against a dazzling white background, nine finely nuanced purple plums reflect the play of light from the surroundings. At the centre is a wine-glass, the upper part of which is just visible against the brightly lit background. A little further back, a white-handled knife and a small spoon seem equally eroded by the light. (JS)*

### I-31 Plate of Cherries and Wine-Glass

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 23 × 32 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, New York

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Barreiro, Paris – Maurice Lehman, Paris – Knoedler, New York – Private collection, New York, 1950.



I-31



I-32

### I-32 Still Life with Oranges

c. 1888  
Oil on wood, 40 × 36 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 30 May 1949, lot 38 (ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.





I-33

### I-33 Flat-Bottomed Glass and Onions

1888  
Oil on canvas, 19.5 × 29 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Gift from the artist to Jos Hessel, Paris, 30 June 1939 – Private collection.



Vincent Van Gogh, *Still Life: Red Cabbages and Onions*, 1887, oil on canvas, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 2 (loaned by Vuillard).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 45; 1948c, p. 10.

The slightly elevated vantage-point is like a distant echo of certain still lifes painted by Caillebotte or even Van Gogh around the same period (see ill.).

### I-34 Meerscham Pipe and a Packet of Tobacco

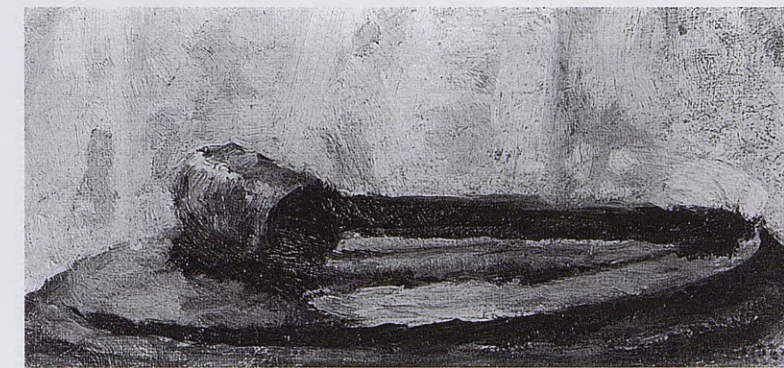
c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 13 × 21 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Trust Estate of Joseph E. Levine, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 13 Nov. 1997, lot 522 (col. ill.) – Private collection – Galerie Bellier, Paris.

**Description:** *The two objects, painted in a heavy impasto, are presented against a white table-cloth in a broad, impressionist style. (AC)*



I-34



I-35

### I-35 The Pipe

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 9.5 × 20 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jeanne Castel, Paris, c. 1950 – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris.

**Description:** *A briar pipe on a round tray against a light-coloured background. (AC)*

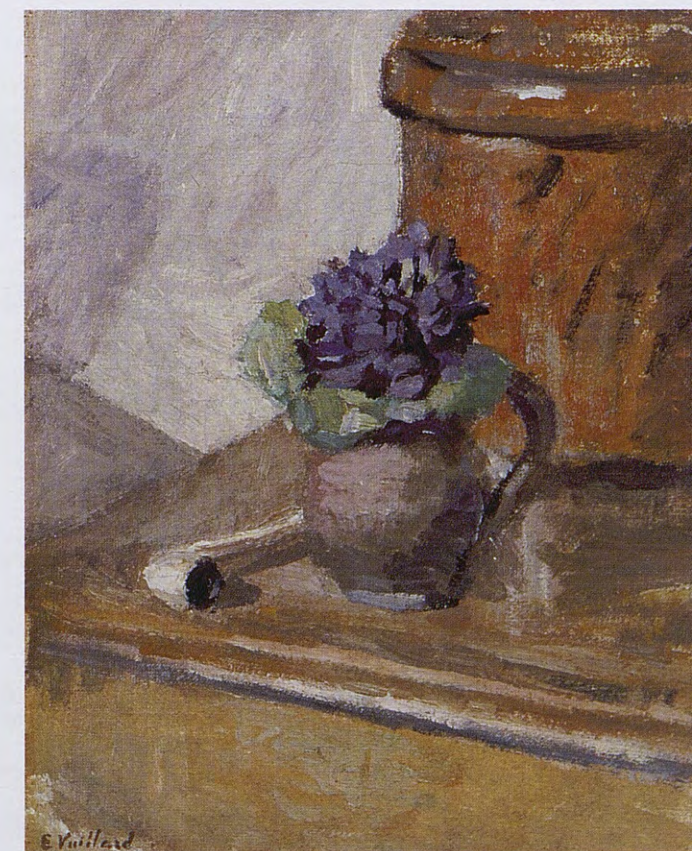
### I-36 Bouquet of Violets and Clay Pipe

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 30 × 24.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Lady Kroyer-Kielberg, London, 1947 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 5 Dec. 1979, lot 33, bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 July 1980 – Galerie Schmit, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** London, Wildenstein, June 1948, no. 2 – Paris, Schmit, 1981, no. 85 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *A bouquet of violets in a small, dark-grey vase next to a large, dark-brown jug. To the left is a white clay pipe. (JS)*



I-36



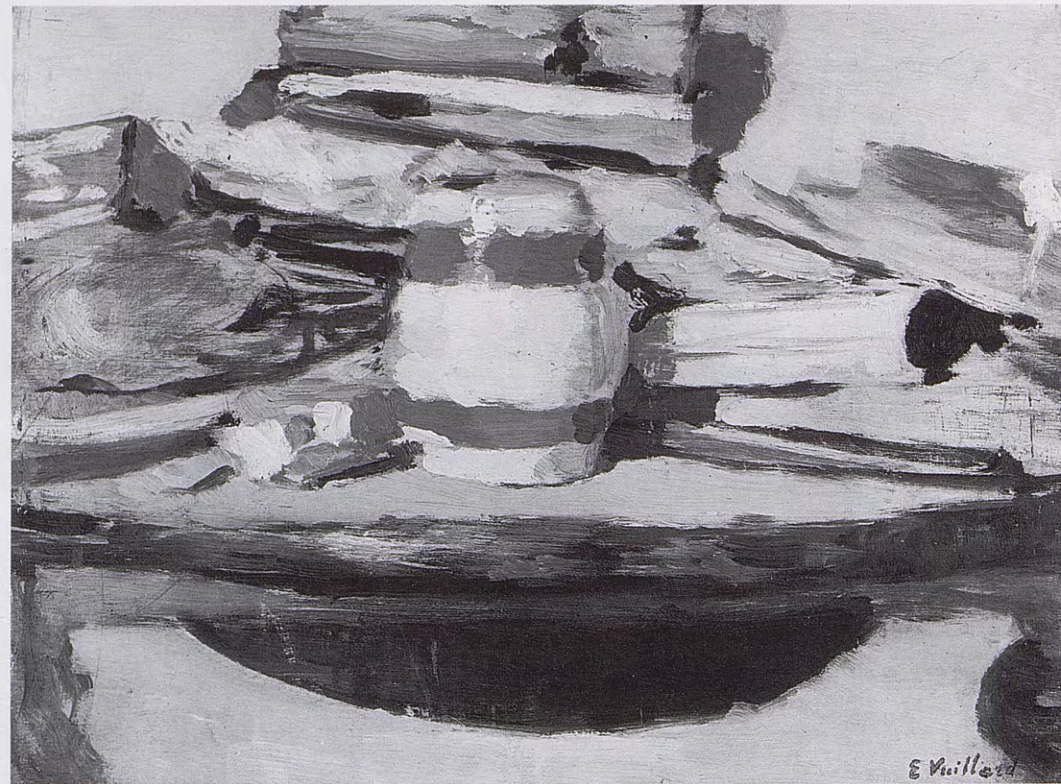
I-37

# The Tobacco Jar

c. 1888  
Oil on hardboard, 23 × 31 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York, until 1964 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A pile of grey and yellow books with a red-striped earthenware jar and a blue cigarette packet. (AC)



I-37



I-38

I-38

# Still Life with a Herring and an Egg

1888  
Oil on canvas, 16 × 24.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York, c. 1955 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A herring, an egg and a few green leaves against an ochre-grey background painted with fairly broad brushstrokes. (AC)



I-39

I-39

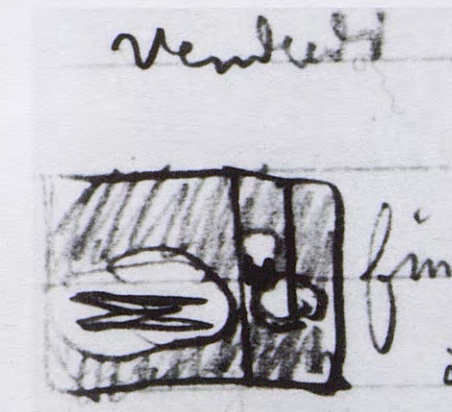
# Smoked Herring

1888  
Oil on canvas, 26 × 40 cm  
Signed lower right: E. Vuillard  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Dr et Mme Prosper-Émile Weil, Paris, 1939-40 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 7 (loaned by Vuillard) – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1953, no. 67 [*Hareng saur*, 1887-88].

It will always come as something of a surprise that Vuillard's Journal between 1888 and 1895 should be silent on some of his most famous paintings, such as *The Sutor* (IV-132) or *Under the Lamp* (IV-78), while dwelling three times on so modest a work as this *Smoked Herring*. On 10 December



E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 32r

1888, he makes a sketch of the work, writing beside it: 'preliminary sketch with too much oil at ten-thirty'.<sup>1</sup> A few days later, on Thursday 13 December, we find an even skimpier sketch, along with the note: 'working in impasto with great gusto, the eye dilated'.<sup>2</sup> Finally, on the following Friday (see ill.), we recognize this very picture,

with the note 'fin' ('end') next to it. It was completed, then, in four days, on 14 December 1888. Rather than Chardin, it is the precision of Zurbarán's still lifes one is reminded of here; or, more aptly still, the *exercices de style* of the great Impressionists. Is this smoked herring not strongly reminiscent of Manet's *Asparagus*?<sup>3</sup> The raised view of this rounded table-edge also foreshadows a good many of Bonnard's still lifes after 1910.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 28v.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., fol. 31v.

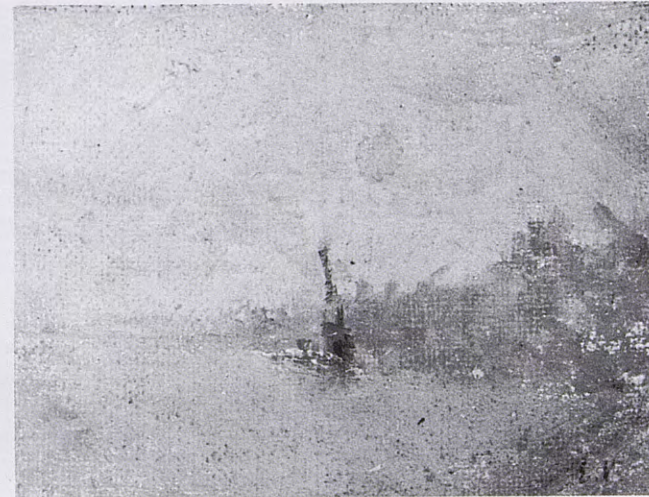
<sup>3</sup> Édouard Manet, *Asparagus*, 1880, oil on canvas, 16.5 × 21.5 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



**I-40**  
**The Tug**

1889  
Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas,  
8 × 10.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Inscribed on rear of cardboard: 89  
Destroyed

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Bellier, Paris;  
destroyed in a fire.



I-40



I-41



I-42

**I-43**  
**Twilight in the Countryside**

1889  
Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas,  
8 × 23 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Inscribed on rear of cardboard: 89  
Private collection, Tokyo

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection,  
Tokyo.

**Exhibition:** Tokyo, Wildenstein, 1974, no. 13  
(ill.).



I-43

**I-41**  
**Thicket**

c. 1889  
Oil on wood, 8.5 × 18 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Bellier, Paris  
– Private collection.

**Description:** A blue sky with grey tufts of thicket on  
the horizon. (JS)

**I-42**  
**The Edge of the Woods**

1889  
Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas,  
7.6 × 18.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Inscribed on rear of cardboard: 89  
Private collection, London

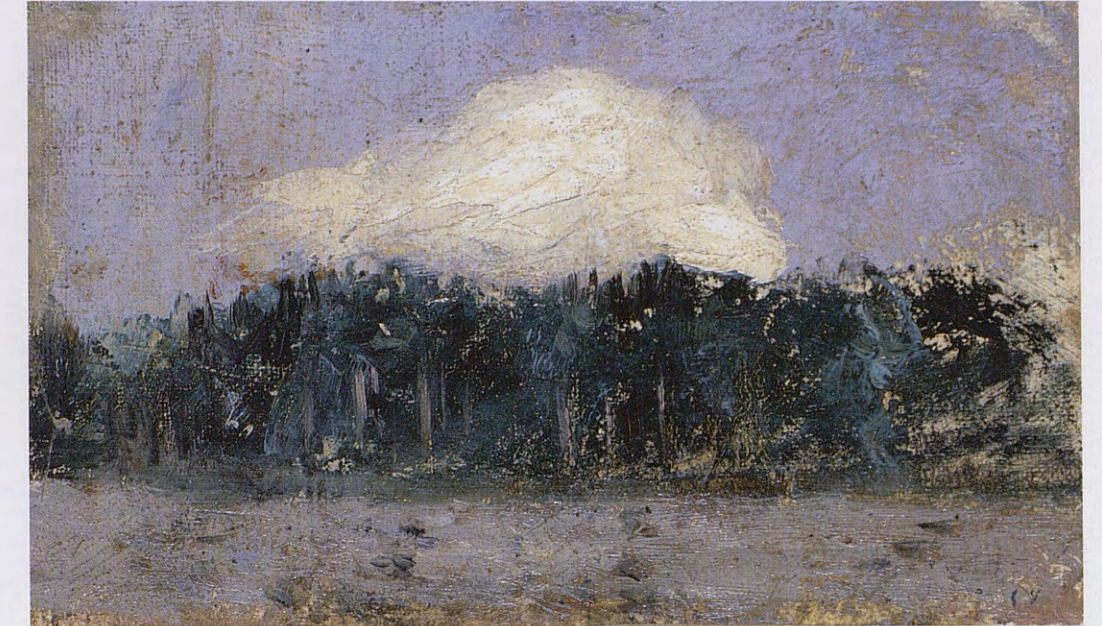
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, Lon-  
don – Private collection, London, 1982.

**I-44**  
**White Cloud over  
the Forest**

1889  
Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas,  
12.5 × 21 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Inscribed on rear of cardboard: 89  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Bellier, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79, no. 1.



I-44



I-45

**I-45**  
**Avenue in a Park**

1889  
Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas,  
13 × 18 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris  
– Auguste Teisseire, France – Private collection.

**I-46**  
**Village Street**

1889  
Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas,  
10 × 13 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Inscribed on rear of cardboard: 89  
Destroyed

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Bellier, Paris;  
destroyed in a fire.



I-46





I-47

# I-47 The Slope

c. 1889  
Oil on canvas, 19.5 × 25.5 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arnoé, Paris – Jean-Pierre Selz, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 10 Dec. 1969, lot 152, bought in – Sale, Hôtel des Ventes, L'Isle-Adam, 28 Oct. 1978, no. 108 – Mathias F. Hans, Hamburg, Germany – Private collection.

**Description:** A grey sky flanked by a green tree on the left. Green bands and broad mauve shadows on the pale-coloured slope. A quick sketch, with some impasto on the left. (AC)



I-48

# I-48 Country Road

c. 1889  
Oil on canvas, 19 × 24 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 21 May 1982, lot 321 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** In the foreground, a yellow-green meadow with three slender tree-trunks on the right. Beyond the division formed by the road, undulating foliage with no clear highlights. (AC)

# I-49 Wasteland

c. 1889  
Oil on canvas mounted on hardboard, 17.7 × 19 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Hôtel Rameau, Versailles, 12 Dec. 1965, lot 56 – Sale, Bukowski-Auktioner, Stockholm, 30 Oct. 1985 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 14-15 March 1995, lot. 204 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Under a yellow sky, a few tentative brush-strokes sketch a group of houses hemmed in by a green-and-yellow slope to the left and, to the right, a yellow-grey wall seen in perspective. (AC)



I-49

# I-50 Bend in the Road

c. 1889  
Oil on canvas, 16 × 27 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Barbara Shields Crowley, United States – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 18 May 1990, lot 301 (col. ill.) – Sale, Christie's, New York, 9 Nov. 1999, lot 232 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Between two embankments, a light-coloured road turns a corner between some trees. Overcast grey sky. A green coppice to the left. A simple grey band marks the horizon. (AC)



I-50





I-51

# I-51 Landscape

c. 1889-90  
Oil on cardboard, 32 × 40 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – M. Bosco, Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France) – Current whereabouts unknown.



I-52

# I-52 Trees in the Forest

c. 1889-90  
Oil on hardboard, 18 × 20 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 13 Nov. 1997, lot 314 (col. ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.



I-53

**Description:** *Foliage flecked with pink and yellow, with three tree-trunks in a subdued light to the left. (AC)*

# I-53 Forest Path

c. 1889-90  
Oil on canvas, 18.5 × 27 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibitions:** Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 4 (col. ill.) – Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79, no. 7 (ill.).

**Description:** *A pink valley with slender, yellow-leaved trees. Hints of mauve, and vivid impastos distinctly reminiscent of the Impressionists. (AC)*

# I-54 Trees in the Forest

c. 1889-90  
Oil on canvas, 22 × 28 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arnoé, Paris – Philippe Agnus, Paris – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 8 Dec. 1970, lot 51 (ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.



I-54



I-55

# I-55 Glade

c. 1889-90  
Oil on canvas, 22 × 28 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Mrs Higgons – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 July 1969, lot 53 (ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *A pink clearing surrounded by yellow foliage, against the green and mauve background of the wood. A fresh, Impressionist-like sketch. (AC)*





I-56

**I-56**  
***Saint Barnabas Healing the Sick* (study after Veronese)**

1889  
Oil on cardboard, 37 × 30 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.

Bibliography: Denis 1959, p. 121.

Vuillard took advantage of his military obligations at Lisieux (Nov.-Dec. 1889) to go and see Veronese's *Saint Barnabas* at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen.

**I-57**  
***A Glass of Madeira***

c. 1889-90  
Oil on canvas, 18 × 28.8 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, Paris

Provenance: Artist's studio – Alfred Daber, Paris – Galerie Schmit, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

Exhibitions: Paris, Daber, 1968, no. 53 – Paris, Schmit, 1969, no. 131 (col. ill.).

**I-58**  
***Daffodils and Jar***

c. 1889-90  
Oil on canvas, 31.8 × 39.4 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Private collection, Switzerland

Provenance: Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Donald S. Stralem, New York, c. 1954 – Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London, c. 1990 – Reid & Lefevre, London – Private collection, Switzerland.

Exhibitions: Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 15 (col. ill.), 100 – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 1 (ill.) – New York, Felicie Gallery, 1983 – London, Gibson, 1990, p. 10 (col. ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-2001, no. 4, p. 81 (col. ill.).

Bibliography: Ritchie 1954, p. 10.



I-57

*Description: A half-empty bottle and a bouquet of green-stemmed narcissi on a low, pink table-top raked by oblique light from a window. To the right, a wide curtain catches the light. (JS)*

This is one of Vuillard's most masterly still lifes, in which he somehow combines the 'minerality' of Fantin-Latour with the

solidly built space of Cézanne. The co-existence of the toned-down yellow of the daffodils, the red liquid in the bottle and, above all, the mauve and green harmonies of the light filtering through the curtain combine to make this painting a minor masterpiece.



I-58





I-59

### I-59 Jar of Gherkins and an Apple

c. 1889-90  
Oil on canvas, 32.7 × 40.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Ralph F. Colin, New York, 1953 – Colin sale, Christie's, New York, 10 May 1995, lot 18 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 5 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, (not in cat.) – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 100 – New York, Knoedler, 1960, no. 7 (ill.).

**Description:** On a table level with the lower edge of the window, a large green apple beside a bottle in which a red pepper contrasts with the green gherkins. Grey-green background with mauve-grey highlights. Traces of red underpainting on the left. (AC)



I-60

### I-60 Carafe, Bottle and Glass

c. 1889-90  
Oil on canvas, 39.4 × 31.1 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Mrs Charles Goldman, New York – Sale, Christie's, New York, 7 Nov. 2001, lot 148 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 6 – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 1 (ill.) – Katonah, Katonah Gallery, 1989, p. 14, no. 3 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A table beside a window, with a bottle, a carafe and the wherewithal for a meal. The direct light multiplies the reflections and the play of warm and cool tints in a palette that otherwise remains subdued. (AC)



I-61

### I-61 Bowl of Peaches

c. 1889-90  
Oil on canvas, 17 × 23 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alfred Daber, Paris – Gustave Zumsteg, Zurich (Switzerland) – Beyeler, Basle (Switzerland) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 April 1987, lot 106 (col. ill.) – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Sale, Christie's, London, 3 April 1990, lot 298 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 169 [dated c. 1920] – Lucerne, Kunstmuseum, 1961, no. 144.



I-62

### I-62 Four Apples

c. 1889-90  
Oil on canvas, 21.5 × 26.6 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Private collection, Boston (Massachusetts).

**Description:** On a white table-top with shades of blue and ochre, four large apples executed in the same spirit as I-63. (AC)

### I-63 Two Apples

c. 1889-90  
Oil on canvas, 12.4 × 16.8 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – O'Hana, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 21 July 1948, lot 148, bought in – Robert von Hirsch, Basle (Switzerland) – Von Hirsch sale (4th part), Sotheby's, London, 26 June 1978, lot 739 (col. ill.) – Mrs J. Pennington, Cambridge, Great Britain – Private collection.

**Description:** On a white tablecloth, two large apples rendered in sour greens and pinks. (JS)



I-63



# I-64

## Jug and Apples

c. 1889-90  
Pastel on paper, 18 × 30.6 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 8 Dec. 1999, lot 119 (col. ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *A green jug and two apples on a blue table, with uniform hatching throughout.* (JS)



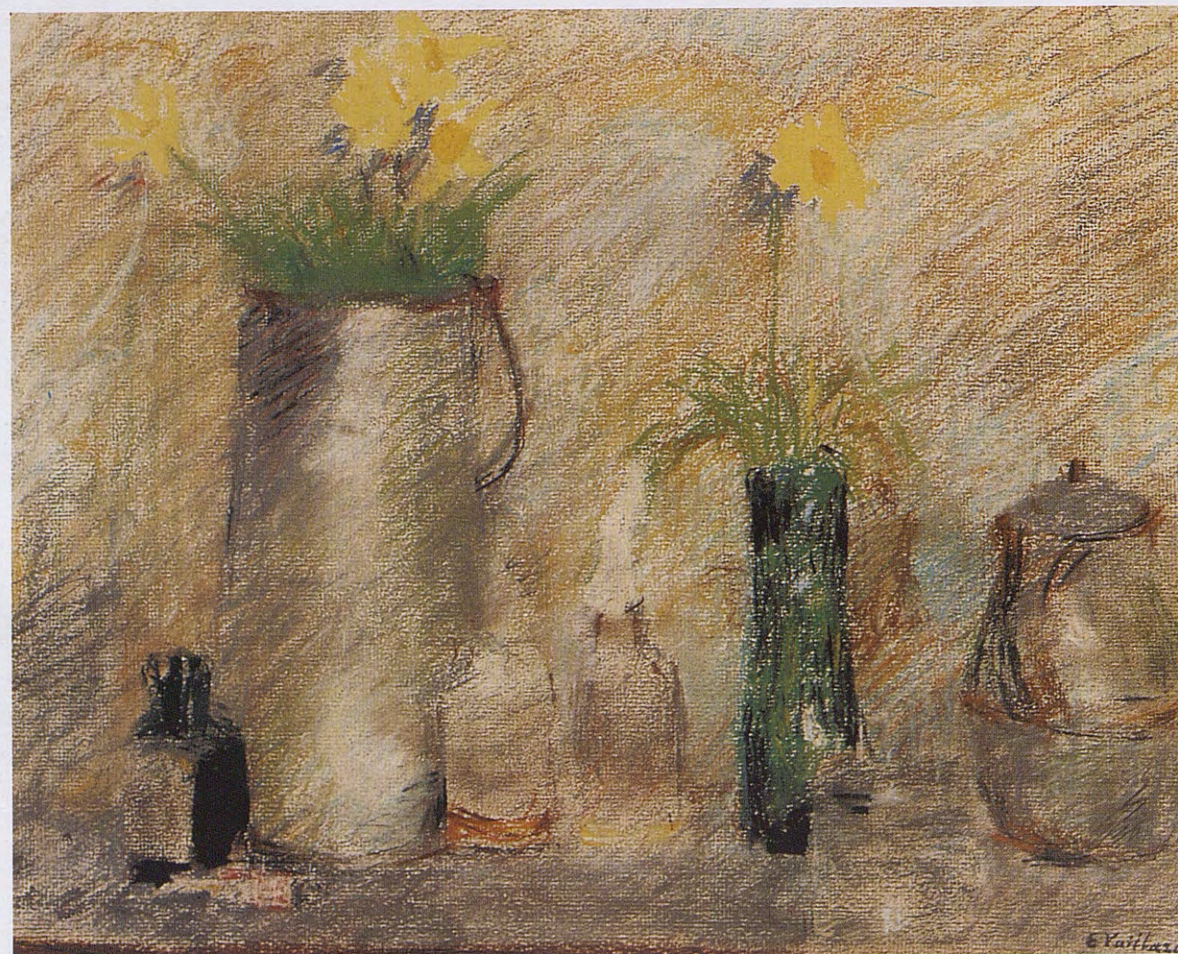
I-64

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 28 Oct. 1979, lot 197 – Sale, Christie's, New York, 15 Nov. 1988, lot 123 (col. ill.) – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 19 Nov. 1989, lot 15 (col. ill.) – Sale, Christie's, London, 3 April 1990, lot 117 (col. ill.) – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris – Private collection, Texas.

# I-65

## Still Life with Flowers and a Bottle

c. 1889-90  
Pastel on paper, 31.7 × 40 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, United States



I-65

# I-66

## Vase of Flowers

c. 1889-90  
Oil on cradled panel, 35.6 × 43.2 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1942 – Jacques Dubourg, Paris, c. 1943 – Jean de Charquirian, Montevideo – A. Schabacher [or Schwabacher?], New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 6 Jan. 1954, lot 61 – Dr. A. J. Murphy, New York; Estate of Isabelle M. Murphy – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 14 May 1992, lot 247 (col. ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 9 Nov. 1995, lot 182 (col. ill.) – Barbara White Fishman, United States – Sale, Christie's, New York, 9 May 2000, lot 146 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *Against a dark green background, mauve and yellow flowers in a vase that casts a green shadow on the yellow table cover.* (AC)



I-66

# I-67

## Bottle, Glass and Cup and Saucer

c. 1889-90  
Oil on cardboard, 33 × 23.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – M. Lambert, Paris – Jacques Dubourg, Paris, c. 1977 – Current whereabouts unknown.

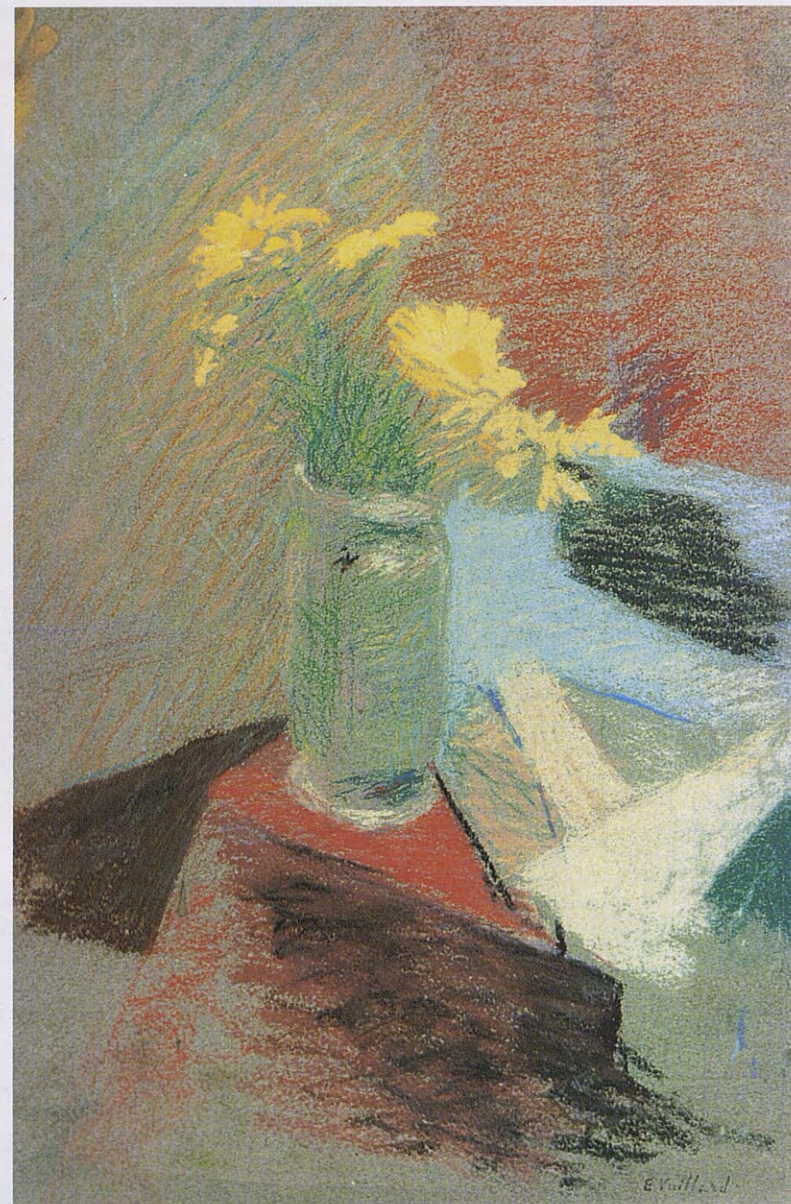


I-67





I-68



I-69

# **I-68** **Flask on a Table**

c. 1889-90  
Oil on cardboard, 37 x 17 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Georges Moos, Geneva – Paul Vogel, Geneva – Sale, Galerie Koller, Zurich (Switzerland), 1 July 1973, lot 3112 (ill.) – Sale, Galerie Koller, Zurich, 9 Nov. 1973, lot 2916 (ill.) – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 6 June 1974, lot 29bis (col. ill.), bought in – Galerie Georges Moos, Geneva – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 81 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 47.

**Description:** Blue objects in fragments against a grey and green background, together with a bottle coloured by a yellowish green liquid in the light that tinges the neck and cork of the bottle pink. (JS)

# **I-69** **Daisies**

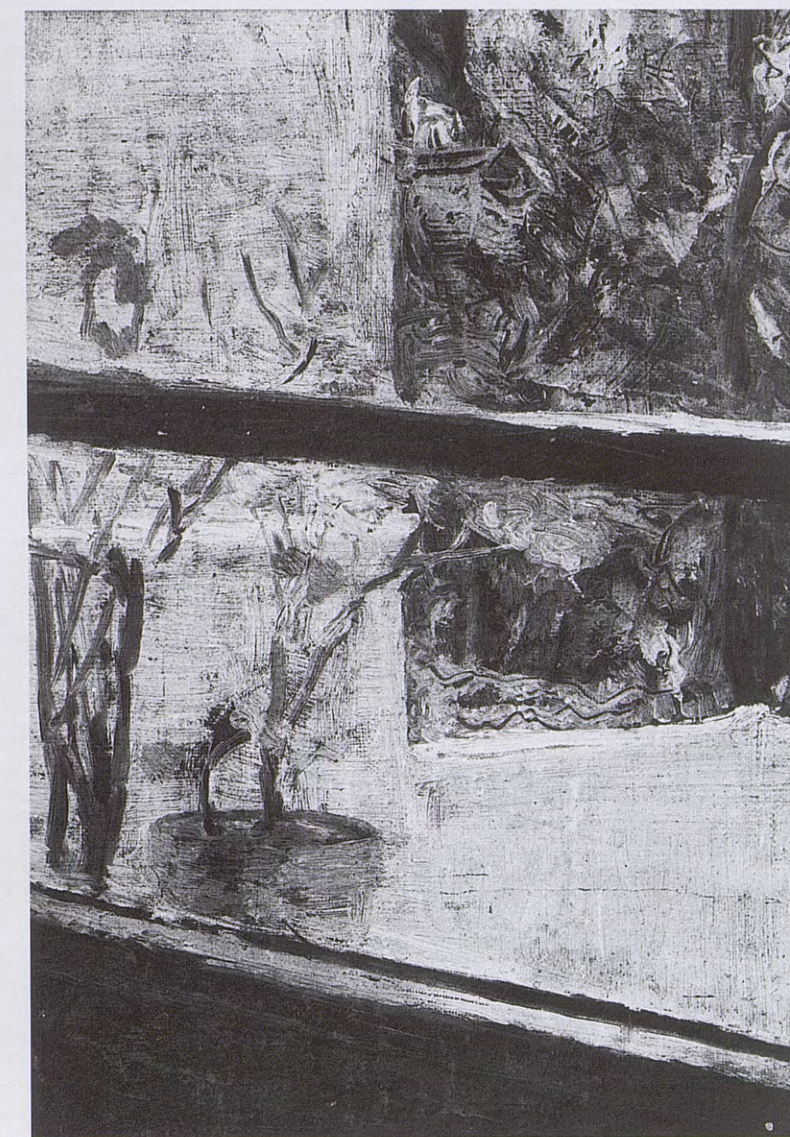
c. 1889-90  
Pastel on paper, 46.3 x 30.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hammer, New York, c. 1985 – Private collection, Hawaii – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas, Paris – Galerie Berès, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Stuttgart, Kunsthaus Bühler, 1996, p. 19 (col. ill.).



I-70



I-71

# **I-70** **Open Window Overlooking Trees**

1889-90  
Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas, 18 x 12.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Inscribed on rear of board: 89  
Private collection, Tokyo

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Tokyo.

**Exhibition:** Tokyo, Wildenstein, 1974, no. 14 (ill.).

In his early days as a Nabi, Vuillard liked to represent nature enclosed within a narrow window-frame. One particular sketch, belonging to a group of drawings similar to

those found in the artist's Journal for 1890 (see ill.) directly foreshadows this painting: behind the window-bar to the right we see a vertical wall that further hems in the trees, and, beneath this, a low, trapezium-shaped

wall. The almost Van Gogh-like tempest of brushstrokes makes the experimental painting less legible than the drawing. This tentative investigation into the structure of vision was to have a crucial influence on Vuillard's later theatre sets.



E. V., sketch from the '1890' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 13.5 x 10.5 cm. Private collection.

# **I-71** **Pot of Flowers on a Windowsill**

c. 1889-90  
Oil on canvas, 31.5 x 26 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie de l'Institut, Paris – Richard Feldhaus, Neuss (Germany), 1965 – Private collection.



## I-72

## The Artist Marc Mouclier

1888

Oil on canvas, 28 × 18 cm

Signed lower left: *E. Vuillard*

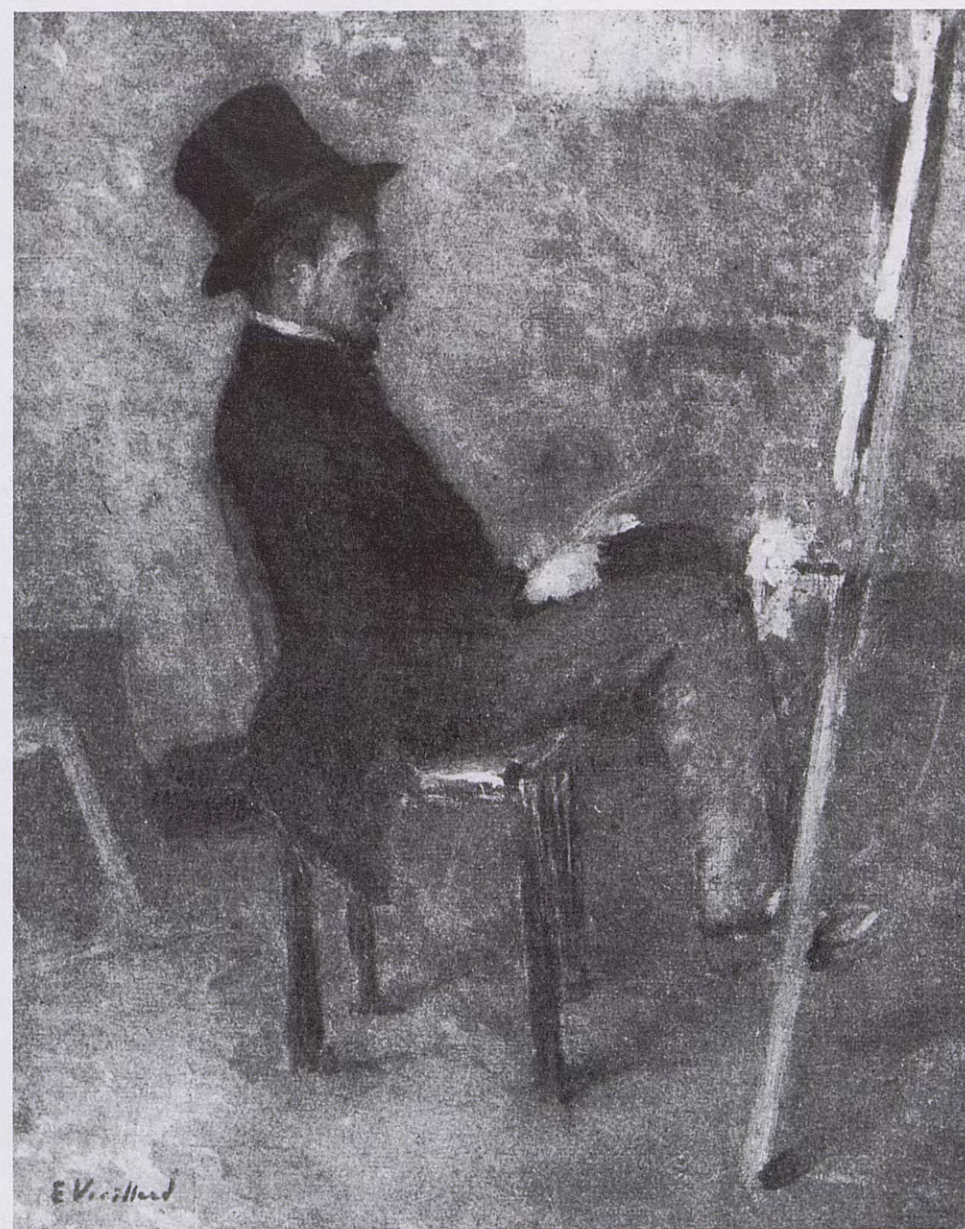
Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee (Wisconsin), M 1979.18

**Provenance:** Marc Mouclier, Paris – Mme Vernat-Nemond, Paris and Ascona (Switzerland) – Private collection, Zurich (Switzerland) – André Emmerich, New York – Anonymous gift to the Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, (Wisconsin) 1979.

**Exhibition:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 70 (ill.).

**Description:** *The painter is seated in profile before his easel, wearing a top-hat.* (JS)

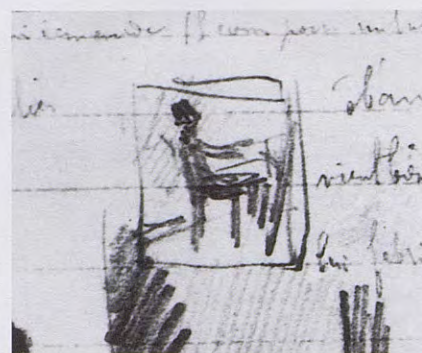
Vuillard was admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts on 21 July 1887, after failing the entrance examinations on three previous occasions. Here he met a circle of friends with whom he would remain in contact, in some cases even into old age. Amongst these was Marc Mouclier, with whom Vuillard maintained a close epistolary relationship between 1890 and 1895 and would continue to correspond until around 1928. Thadée Natanson has left us one of the few recollections we have of Mouclier, off the cuff though it may be: 'Marc Mouclier is anything but a theoretician, he is a passionate lover of painting, much less pre-occupied with the art that might yet be made than with that which is made, a lover of painting for its own sake, a colourist from the depths of his heart to the tips of his fingers, and who feels the resonance of colour as accurately and as powerfully as those more fortunate than he. This native of the Charente, who has grown a little stout, was often red-faced even as a younger, slimmer man, and his bulbous nose seemed even bigger when flushed.' The dauber's red mug can be made out in this amusing portrait by Vuillard; his friend is captured in a relaxed pose, obstinately sporting a top-hat and hesitating before an easel. Vuillard also made a detailed sketch of the painting – which some scholars have mistaken for a self-portrait – in his Journal (27 November 1888), adding the following



I-72



E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 15v. (27 Nov. 1888).



E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 31v. (13 Dec. 1888).

comment along the top: 'arrived at Mouclier's [who was] out of his mind' (see ill.). Three tiny sketches appear in the Journal, one on 11 December<sup>2</sup> ('afternoon at Mouclier's; oil sketch turned out quite well; good chat') and two between 13 (see ill.) and 14 December.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Natanson 1948, p. 283.

<sup>2</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 30r.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., fol. 32v.



I-73

## I-73

## Portrait of Grand-Mère Michaud

1888

Oil on canvas, 29 × 30.5 cm

Stamp I, lower left

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Ralph F. Colin, New York, 1957 – Colin sale, Christie's, New York, 10 May 1995, lot 27 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** New York, Knoedler, 1960, no. 12 (ill.).

**Description:** *An old woman dressed in black, in a bonnet crowned with a piece of red fabric, reading. Light from a window on the right models and renders somewhat 'geometrical' the long face with lowered eyelids, treated in muted colours.* (AC)

In his Journal for 28 November 1888,<sup>1</sup> after sketching the planned portrait in miniature,

Vuillard announces: 'afternoon timid rough sketch of grandma theory takes over'. Some ten days later, on 8 December, he repeats a tiny sketch of the painting, adding: 'trails of colour in small quantities blacks and greens... on the point of giving up'.<sup>2</sup> These small dots of green on black are more readily found in the famous, pointillist-style portrait of his grandmother, *Grand-Mère Michaud Seen against the Light* (II-2), which we consider to be later in date. It is not impossible that Vuillard used several different techniques at the same time, one post-Romantic and Tenebrist, the other neo-Impressionist; after all, the whole of the Paris art-world was talking about Seurat's new 'formula' at the time. The present painting may be compared to a large drawing executed in Conté crayon and exhibited at the 1889 Salon (see ill.).

Marie Antoinette Désirée Michaud (1818-93) appears to have played an important role in Vuillard's childhood. A short letter she wrote to him during his trip to Holland with Kerr-

Xavier Roussel (autumn 1892) reveals quite clearly the love she felt for her grandson: 'I long to receive your morning and evening kisses once more, but am resigned to the thought that what you are doing is good, and that you will make it up to me on your return'.<sup>3</sup>

A discreet presence at the heart of the family home, Marie Michaud embodied a timeless continuity, an authority from the past that was all the more meaningful now that the painter's father had passed away. The paternal *potestas* was replaced in this way by a singular female triad dominated by the distant figure of the grandmother. In the present



E. V., *Portrait of Grand-Mère Michaud*, 1888, Conté crayon on paper, 42 × 36 cm. Private collection.

painting, Vuillard treats her with tenderness and in a manner far-removed from a grotesquely caricatured portrait made around the same period with which it might be compared, Émile Bernard's *The Artist's Grandmother* (see ill.).



Émile Bernard, *The Artist's Grandmother*, 1887, oil on canvas, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 16r.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., fol. 25r.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Marie Michaud to E. V., 13 Nov. 1892, Salomon archives.



## I-74

## Madame Vuillard in Profile

c. 1888

Oil on canvas, 28 × 32.5 cm

Stamp I, lower right

The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (Illinois), 1988.262

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Mary and Leigh Block, Chicago – Donation by Mary and Leigh Block to the Art Institute of Chicago, 1988.

**Exhibition:** Washington D.C.–Los Angeles, 1967, no. 30 (ill.).

**Description:** *The artist's mother in profile, wearing a black coiffe, against the grey background of a wall.*

*The right-hand part of the painting is sketched in summary fashion. (JS)*



E. V., Madame Vuillard, c. 1888, graphite on paper, 19 × 16.5 cm. Private collection.

This portrait has by turns been considered to be of the artist's aunt, Marie-Amélie Saurel, or of his grandmother, Désirée Michaud; the two women were aged seventy-one and seventy respectively when Vuillard painted the portrait. A more likely candidate in our view is the artist's mother, aged fifty at the time. A drawing by Vuillard from the same period (see ill.) confirms this identification. The mistake is understandable, since the women who come from the same family all look very much alike in Vuillard's life: Marie Roussel became the spitting image of her mother around 1900-05, with fifteen years' difference. And Madame Vuillard turned into a 'Grand-mère Michaud' during the Great War.



I-74

## I-75

## Portrait of Marie Vuillard

1888

Oil on canvas, 32.5 × 24.4 cm

Stamp I, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection until 1992 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 30 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 17 – London, Marlborough, 1954, no. 60 – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 204 – Munich, Kunstverein, 1959, no. 29 – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 3, p. 59 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 83; 1946b, p. 68 (ill.) – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 9 (ill.).

**Description:** *The reddish-brown bodice is of a similar hue to the back of the room, where a few objects can just be discerned. A crescent-shaped brooch gleams at the neck of the bodice. (JS)*

Painted over the very same weeks as I-73, this portrait of Vuillard's sister brings out the real, almost unbecoming face of a figure who, together with the painter's mother and Misia Natanson, was among those dearest to him and was to haunt his painting. A photographic portrait of Marie in 'visiting-card' format taken at the same period proves that the painter was faithful to reality (see ill.). He worked on the painting between 28 November and 15 December 1888, and not without a certain exasperation, as several passages and sketches in his Journal record. Thus, on 8 December, after alluding to Titian, Leonardo da Vinci and Rembrandt, he goes on: 'colouring found for lower part of the face; no sincer-



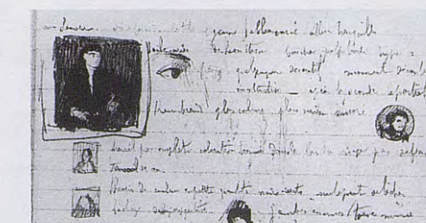
Portrait photograph of the artist's sister, Marie Vuillard. Private collection. Studio Allévy, Paris.



I-75

ity; the painting is sh. [shit?] (see ill.); on 10 December: 'profile done with great energy still somewhat het up';<sup>1</sup> and on 12 December: 'more and more impasto building up mellowing.'<sup>2</sup> This plain composition

'has certain affinities with some of Degas' old works.'<sup>3</sup> Nothing in the physiognomy suggests the extravagant expressions the Nabi painter would soon be attributing to her (see *Mother and Daughter against a Red Background*, II-106).



E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 25v. (8 Dec. 1888).

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 28v.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., fol. 31r.

<sup>3</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 83.



## I-76

## Vuillard with White Collar

1888

Oil on canvas, 42 × 34.5 cm

Stamp I, lower right

Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arnold S. Askin, New York, 1966 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 14 Nov. 1990, lot 372 (col. ill.) – Private collection – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 28 Nov. 1994, lot 71 (col. ill.) – Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection, France.

**Exhibitions:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 100 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, (not in cat.).

**Description:** A rather searching portrait in which Vuillard's skills as a colourist are already visible in the modelling and in the detailed observation of tonal values. (JS)

This may be the self-portrait Vuillard mentions in his Journal for 29 November 1888,<sup>1</sup> declaring that he has managed to model it with his fingers, under the influence of his teacher, François Flameng, at the Académie Julian, whom he venerated at the time. In 1888, Vuillard's taste was still turned towards a certain style of academic painting, as Jacques Salomon attests: 'In truth, Vuillard was more interested at the time in the Salon, where the naturalism of Bastien-Lepage, derived from Courbet, held sway, and it was from among the ranks of official painters that he still sought his models to admire. Denis tells us that he was particularly interested in the pictures of Rixens, who, like Maillart, exhibited at the Salon. Rixens was a famous portrait-painter, and Vuillard, having been introduced to him, called on him several times to submit his work to him. When Denis, astonished, pressed Vuillard for an explanation one day, Vuillard is said to have replied that he thought very highly of the *natural side* of Rixens' work, and the *perfect execution of his paintings*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 17r.

<sup>2</sup> Salomon 1945, p. 19.



I-76

## I-77

## Self-Portrait in a Mirror

c. 1887-88

Oil on wood, 27.3 × 21.3 cm

Stamp I, lower right

Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Paul Mellon, Upperville (Virginia) – Sale, Christie's, New York, 15 Nov. 1983, lot 21 (col. ill.) – Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Marcel Rochas, 1949-50, no. 62 – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1966, no. 169 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 3 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Preston 1971, p. II, frontispiece (col. ill.) – Daniel 1984, pp. 371, 373, fig. 130 – Ciaffa 1985, p. 105, fig. 19 – Easton 1989, p. 10 – Forgiione 1992, p. 113, fig. 62 – Cogeval 2002, p. 12.

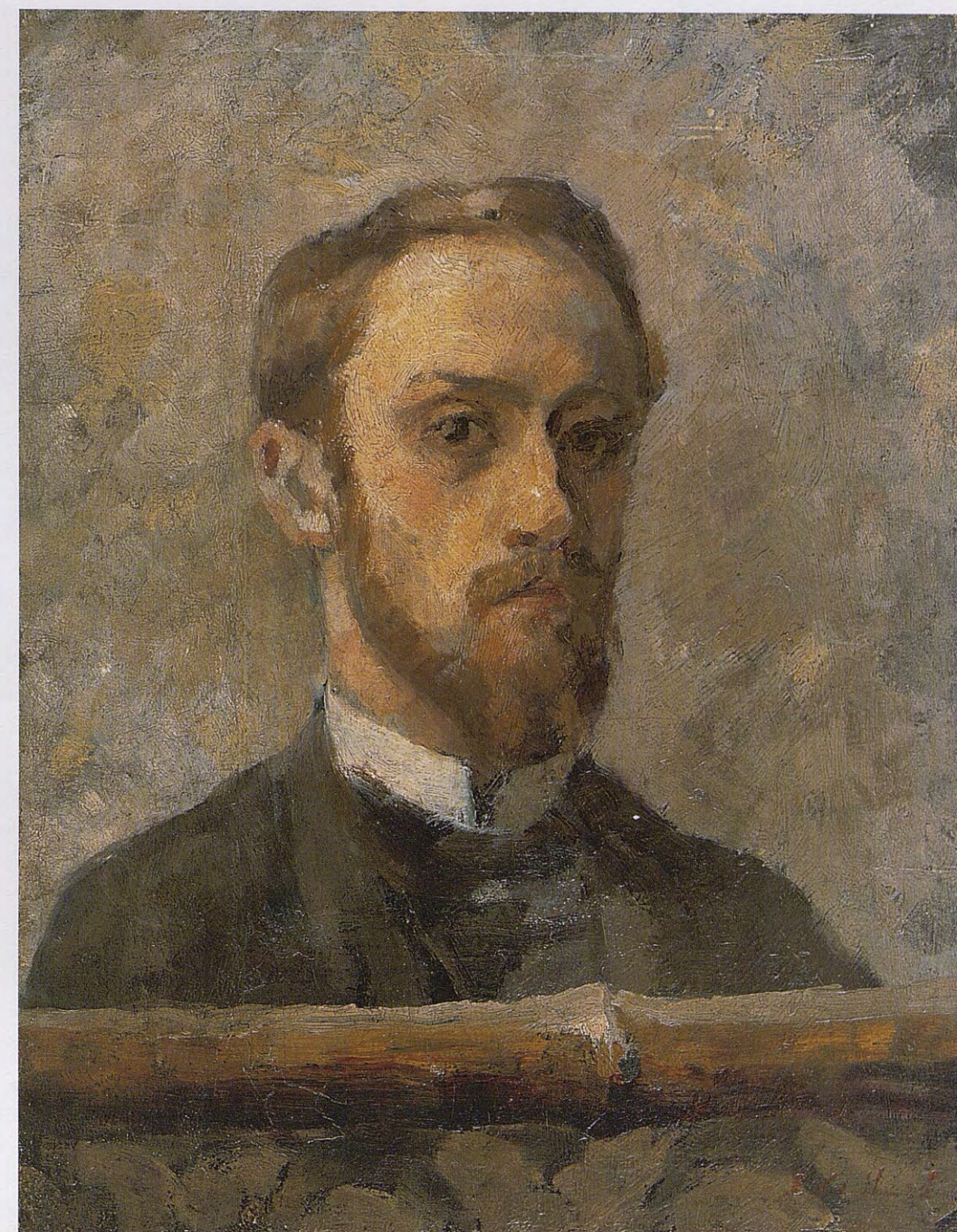
**Description:** The face is turned slightly to one side, against a grey background. The bust is cut off by the bamboo frame of the mirror. (JS)

This striking self-portrait must have been painted at a time when Vuillard was still frequenting the studios of the academic painters Bouguereau and Robert-Fleury, and should be compared with an unpublished, life-sized



E. V., Study Sheet with Self-portrait, charcoal on paper, 30.5 × 47 cm. Private collection.

charcoal drawing (see ill.), found on the back of a sheet of academic studies of the kind all pupils at the École des Beaux-Arts had to make, in which the young artist portrays himself with astonishing realism. Here, he depicts himself reflected in a bamboo-framed mirror that will turn up later in his work (I-100), but of which he subtly reveals only the lower edge. This premeditated compositional device is a flagrant allusion to the



I-77

well-known portraits of the Italian Renaissance, in which the model appears behind a low wall (a banister, a window frame) that distances him from our gaze and enables the artist to set down his signature: one thinks of Antonello da Messina's *Portrait of a Man*<sup>1</sup> or the same artist's *Salvator Mundi*,<sup>2</sup> of Bellini's *Portrait of the Doge Leonardo Loredan*.<sup>3</sup> It is unlikely that Vuillard ever saw himself as the saviour of the world, though posing as the saviour of painting may have appealed to him even at this early date. Ever since his youth, he had been attracted to the emotional distancing that a mirror image affords, as well

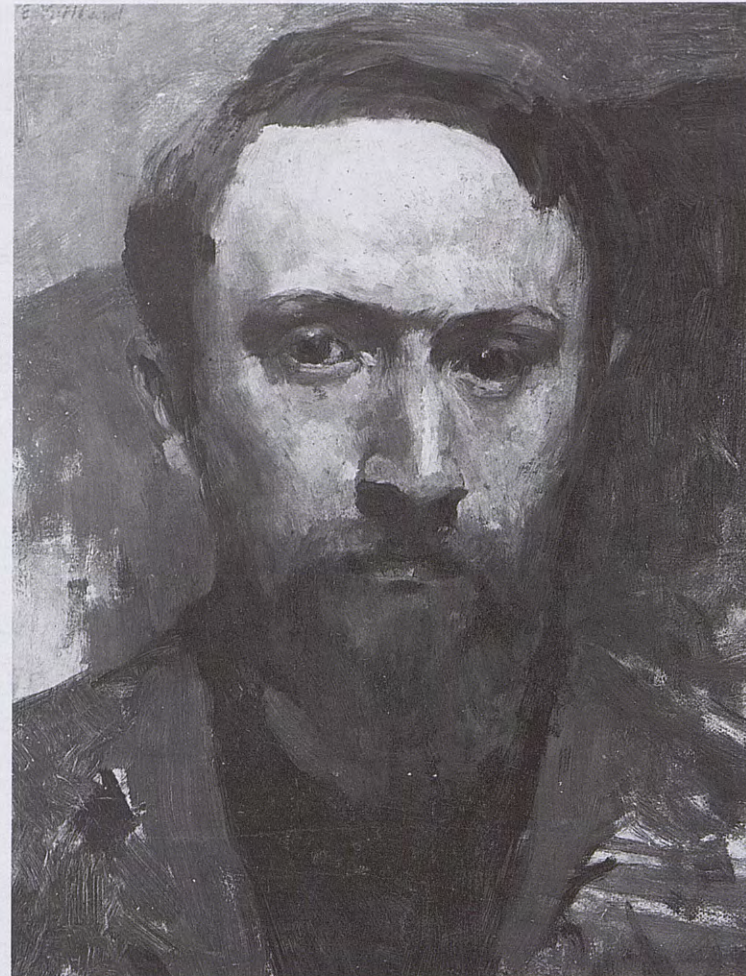
as to devices of this kind found in the paintings of the past. Here, he makes use of that 'shimmering' palette that he will shortly abandon, but which for the time being attaches him to the twilight of romanticism, as is only to be expected of a young man barely twenty years old, full of ambition but still somewhat shy.

<sup>1</sup> Antonello da Messina, *Portrait of a Man*, called *Il Condottiere*, 1475, oil on wood, 35 × 28 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Antonello da Messina, *Christ Blessing or Salvator Mundi*, 1465 (?), oil on wood, 38.7 × 29.8 cm, National Gallery, London.

<sup>3</sup> Giovanni Bellini, *Portrait of Doge Leonardo Loredan*, 1501-1504, oil on poplar, 61.6 × 45.1 cm, National Gallery, London.





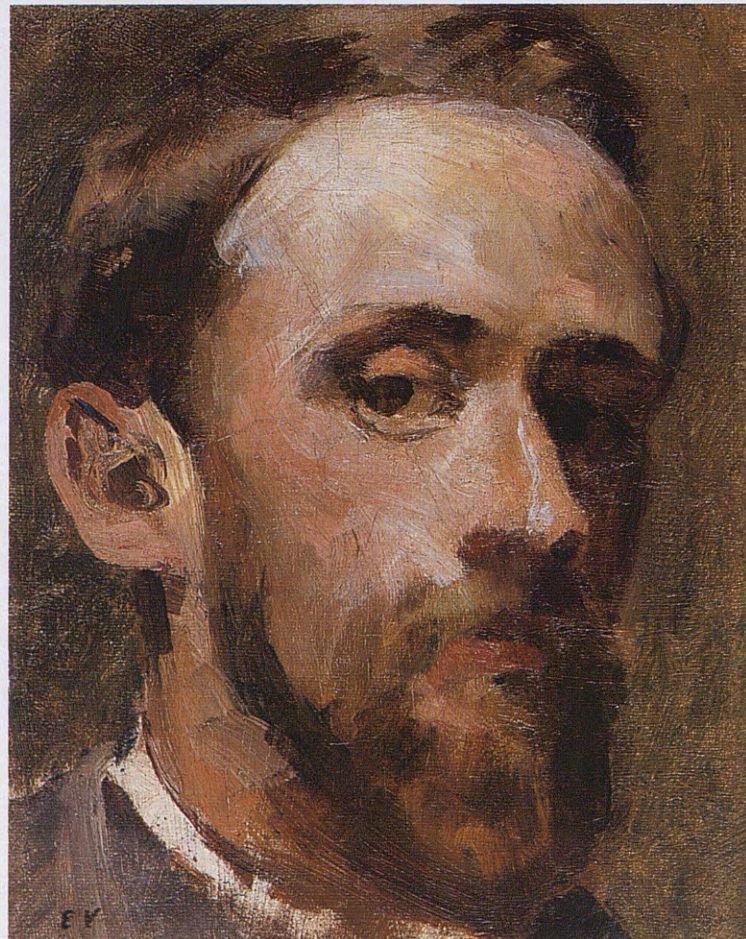
I-78

### I-78 Self-Portrait

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 30.5 × 22.8 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Indiana University Art Museum,  
Bloomington (Indiana), 76.9

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 5 Dec. 1974, lot 237 (ill.) – Roland, Browse & Delbanco, London – Galerie Berès, Paris – Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, 1976.

**Description:** *The face is seen head-on and lit from above. Red background. (JS)*



I-79

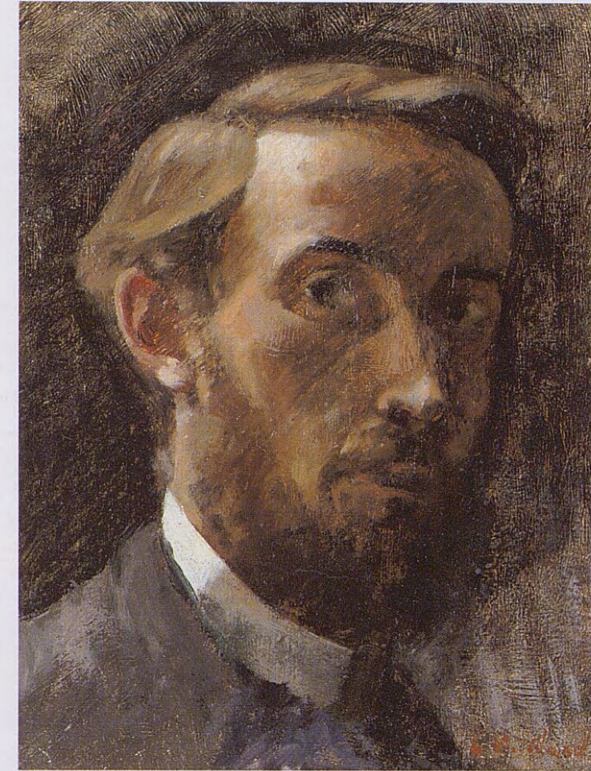
### I-79 Self-Portrait

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 24 × 19 cm  
Stamp 4, lower left  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Salomon, Paris – Gift to Lucien Fontanarosa – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Grand Palais, 1983, no. 59.

**Description:** *A canvas executed in a broad and somewhat unusual manner for an academic study of its kind. (JS)*



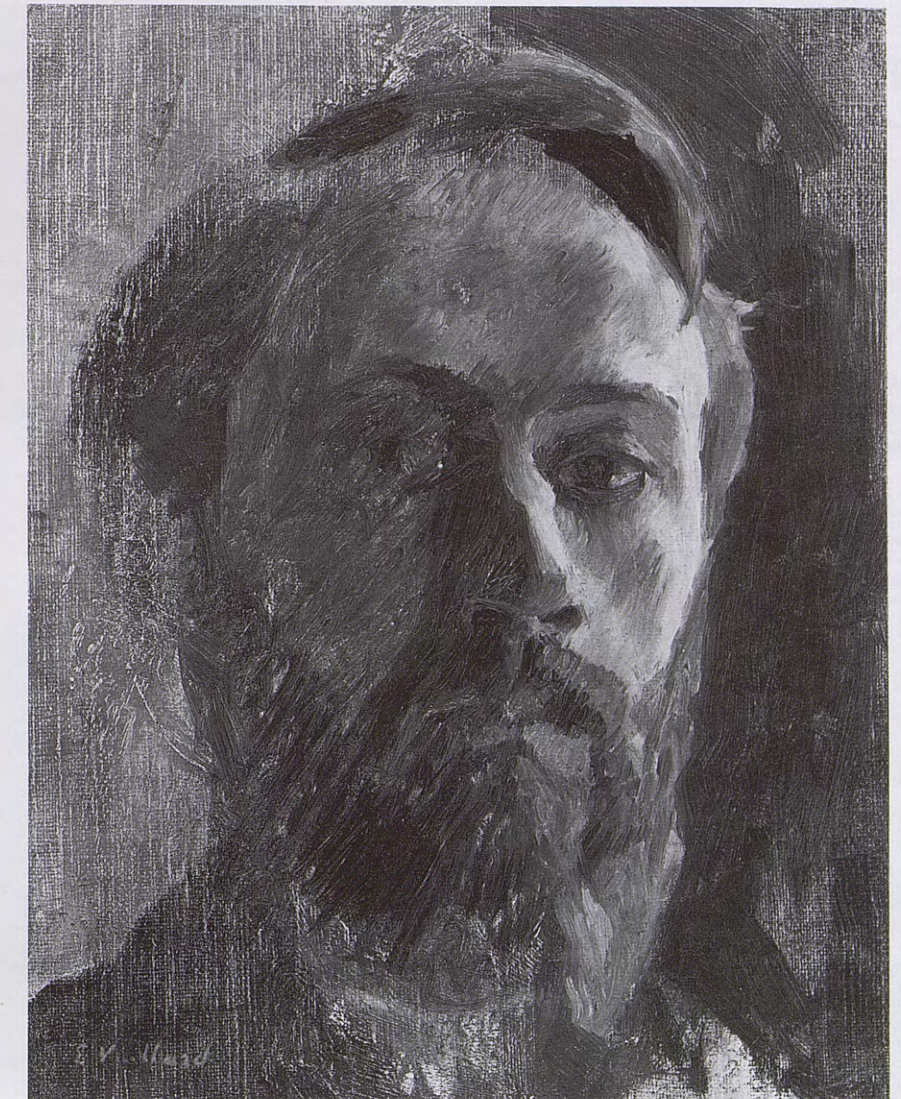
I-80

### I-80 Self-Portrait

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 23 × 18 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
National Gallery of Art, Washington  
D.C., Collection of Mr and Mrs Paul  
Mellon, 1995.47.15

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Paul Mellon, Upperville (Virginia), 1969 – Donation by Mellon to the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1995.

**Description:** *Slanting light from the top left of the painting illuminates the hair, the right-hand temple, the tip of the nose and the collar. (AC)*



I-81

### I-81 Self-Portrait

c. 1888  
Oil on canvas, 26 × 20.2 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection, United States, 1989.

**Exhibitions:** London, JPL, 1984, no. 39 (col. ill.); 1985 (col. ill. on cover) – Melbourne-Sydney, 1985, no. 36, (ill.).



## I-82

## Self-Portrait against the Light

c. 1888

Oil on canvas, 26.7 × 19.7 cm

Stamp I, upper left

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hector Brame, Paris – Wildenstein, New York – Donald and Jean Stralem Collection, New York, 1955 – Stralem Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 8 May 1955, lot 40 (col. ill.) – Carl Icahn, United States – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 2 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, p. 10 – Forgione 1992, p. 113, fig. 61.

**Description:** *A study in contrejour, with a white window-curtain for background. The light, however, comes from the left, illuminating the side of the face and the tip of the nose, and imparting a red transparency to the ear.* (JS)



Jacek Malczewski, *Self-Portrait in Armour*, 1914, oil on canvas, Narodowe w Warszawie, Warsaw.

Vuillard here gives himself for the first time the forbidding appearance of a Renaissance humanist-*condottiere*. The presence of the back-lit white curtain discreetly calls to mind certain portraits by Lorenzo Lotto, or Giovanni Bellini's *Doge Loredan*.<sup>1</sup> The artist's bearing is distinctly romantic, his black collar reaching all the way up to his beard, accentuating the air of mystery. By plunging it in half-darkness, he has for once conferred upon his face a solemn, Tenebrist beauty. This is one of the first paintings, no doubt, in which Vuillard gives a measure of his nascent genius; the inward nature of the gaze he brings to



I-82

bear upon himself boldly anticipates the works of the Polish artist, Jacek Malczewski, and, in particular, his *Self-Portrait in Armour* (see ill.). As a painter dedicated to modern life, Vuillard succeeds in conveying a sense of heroism without resorting to the trappings of the past.

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Bellini, *Portrait of Doge Leonardo Loredan*, 1501-1504, oil on poplar, 61.6 × 45.1 cm, National Gallery, London.



I-83

## I-83

## Vuillard with a Boater

c. 1888

Oil on canvas, 35 × 30 cm

Stamp I, lower right

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 10 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 27 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 1 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 37 – Paris, Marcel Rochas, 1949-50, no. 63 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1953, no. 27 [*Portrait de l'artiste au canotier*, c. 1892] – Paris, Galerie Berès, May 1957, no. 60 (ill.) – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 1 (ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 1 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 1 – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-64, no. 303 (col. ill.) – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 1 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 4 (ill.) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 3 (ill.) – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1973, no. 2

– Pau, Beaux-Arts, 1973, p. 71 (ill.) – Japan, traveling exhib., 1977-78, no. 1 (col. ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-2001, no. 2, p. 10 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1945, p. 25 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 83 – Salomon 1961, p. 20 (col. ill.); 1968, p. 38 (col. ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, pp. 13-14 – *Paris Match* 1976, p. 122 (col. ill.) – Mauner 1978, p. 206, fig. 50 – Georges 1982, p. 43 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, frontispiece (col. ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, p. 12 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *The face is bathed in muted colours. The light strikes brightly at the top of the hat, the tip of the nose and the red beard. Cold background.* (JS)

Giving himself the air of a budding young seminarist, Vuillard here gives us his first famous self-portrait, executed in the manner of Fantin-Latour. As John Russell noted, the artist is more interested in his attire, which 'is essentially that of a down-

at-heel, high-minded dandy'. Two aspects highlighted in this portrait will reappear throughout Vuillard's work, particularly in his self-portraits: a mild anxiety, combined with an embarrassment at being observed, a Jansenist reserve suggesting an alertness that is permitted only a surreptitious appearance within the framework of the painting. The extreme maturity of the gaze of this young man, grown old before his time, struck Claude Roger-Marx: 'For all its radiance and freshness of complexion, this is no longer the gaze of a twenty-year-old.' The psychological instability emanating from this composition should be contrasted with *Self-Portrait with Walking-Stick and Boater* (II-27), in which the painter invests himself with an air of self-confidence that is altogether new.





I-84

### I-84 Self-Portrait

c. 1889  
Oil on canvas, 40 x 32.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Gustave M. Berne, Great Neck (New York) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 11 May 1977, lot 56 (col. ill.), bought in – Rothschild Fine Arts, New York – Sale, Christie's, New York, 17 May 1984, lot 330 – James Kirkman, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 3 Dec. 1986, lot 167 (col. ill.),

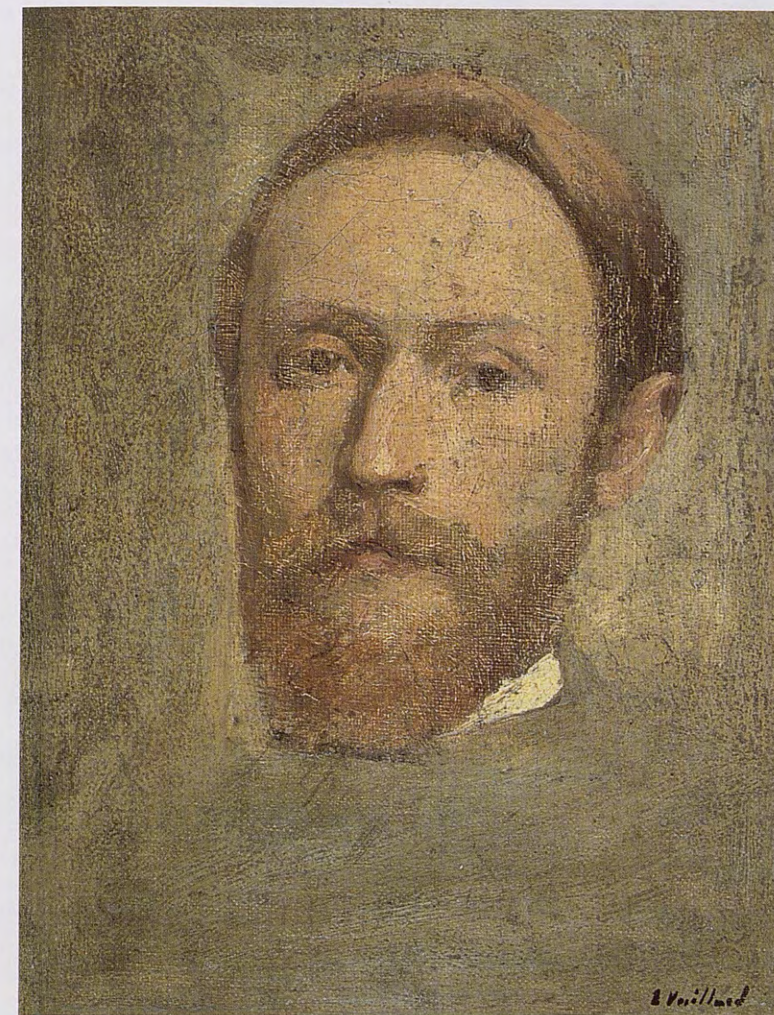
bought in – Jan Krugier, Geneva – Sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris, 9 Dec. 1989, lot 106 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Hôtel des Ventes, Verrières-le-Buisson (France), 5 Dec. 1993, lot 76 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** New York, Shepherd, 1989, no. 70 (ill.).

The contours of the face seem to dissolve in mist. This soft-focus style, an exception in Vuillard's work, seems to foreshadow the self-portraits of Eugène Carrière (see ill.).



Eugène Carrière, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1900, oil on canvas. Private collection.



I-85

### I-85 Self-Portrait (study of his face)

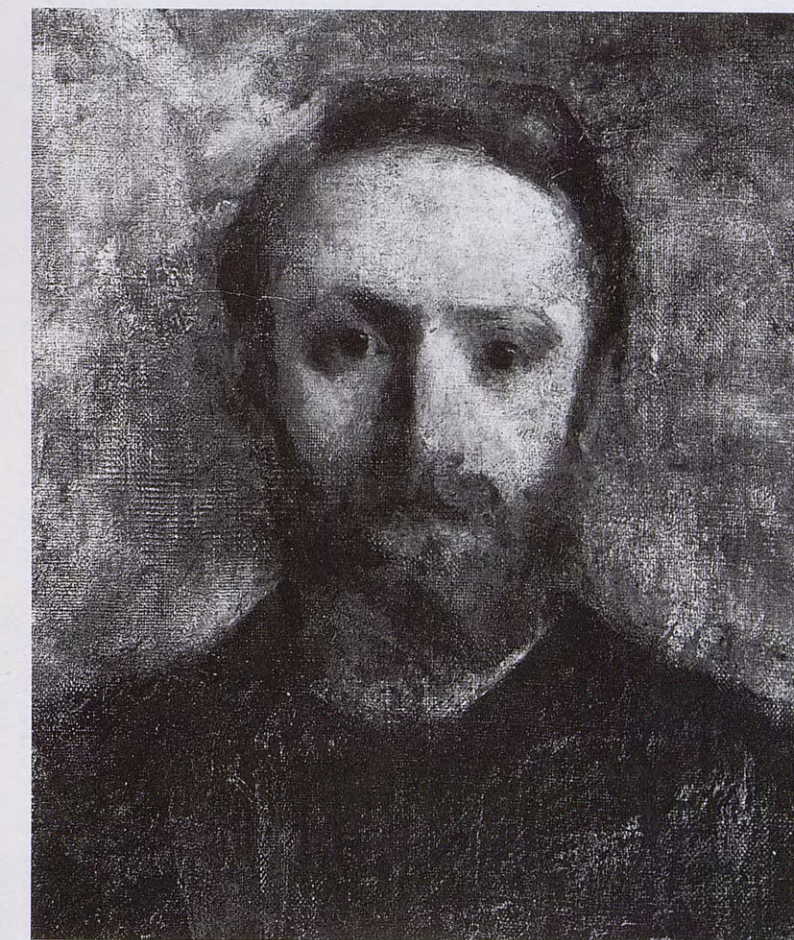
c. 1889  
Oil on canvas, 24.5 x 19 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1977-384

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris – Donation by Hessel to the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1942; transferred to the Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1977; transferred to Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 1986.

**Exhibitions:** Zurich, Kunsthau, 1932, no. 122 [*Portrait de l'artiste à 25 ans, 1893*] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1933, no. 342 – Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 73 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 9 [*Portrait de l'artiste, en buste, c. 1888*] – Paris, Musées Nationaux, 1945, no. 279 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 30 (ill.) – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 56 – Liège-Ghent-Luxembourg, 1948, no. 16 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 34 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 3 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 3 (ill.) – Lyons-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 6, p. 59 (ill.) – Gifu, Museum of Fine Arts, 1993, no. 177, p. 99 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Bernard 1930, p. 24 (ill.) – Ladoué 1943-44, p. 75 – Dorival 1946, p. 38 – Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 83 – Cassou, Dorival and Homolle 1947, p. 13, no. 32; 1954, p. 163 – Humbert 1954a, pl. 42 – Du Colombier 1955, p. 506 (ill.) – Schweicher 1955, pl. 2 – Dorival 1957, p. 21; 1961, p. 17 (col. pl.) – Russoli 1966, fig. 1 – *Time*, 23 August 1968, p. 56 (ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 43 – Daniel 1984, p. 381, fig. 137 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 88-89, fig. 5 – Compin and Roquebert 1986, p. 282 (ill.) – Rosenblum 1989, p. 604 (col. ill.) – Compin, Lacambre and Roquebert 1990, p. 478 (ill.) – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 17 (ill.).

**Description:** *Almost a pale grey-green monochrome, with a few highlights in the hair, mouth, beard and eyes. The white of the collar, to the right of centre, conjures up the clothing.* (JS)



I-86

### I-86 Self-Portrait

1889  
Oil on canvas, 28.6 x 25.1 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Inscribed on rear: 89

**Rau Foundation for the Third World, Zurich (Switzerland)**

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Rouso, Paris, c. 1973 – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Private collection, Switzerland – Sale, Christie's, London, 4 Dec. 1990, lot 265 (col. ill.) – Rau Foundation for the Third World, Zurich (Switzerland).

**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79, no. 8 (ill.).

**Description:** *A study in muted tones: the ginger-coloured beard and pink face seem to emerge slowly from a misty grey background.* (AC)



I-87

# Henri Colmet d'Aâge and Frédéric Henry (sketch)

c. 1889

Oil on wood (or cardboard),

35 × 26.5 cm

Stamp I, lower right

Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.

On the back of the board is a sketch in which we can dimly make out a nanny reading a newspaper on a bench, with a child at her feet. Along the bottom edge of the panel is a note in pencil: 'Black hair Frédéric Henry [?]'.<sup>1</sup>



I-87

I-88

# Henri Colmet d'Aâge

c. 1889

Oil on canvas, 41 × 33 cm

Signed and dedicated, lower right: *à mon**cher Henri / Colmet d'Aâge / amicalement**EVuillard*

Current whereabouts unknown

Provenance: Current whereabouts unknown.

This fine, vigorous portrait in the romantic manner depicts one of Vuillard's closest friends, whom he first met at the Lycée Condorcet. He mentions him several times in his Journal. On Friday, 30 November 1888, he notes: 'evening at Colmet's talk

about women'.<sup>1</sup> It is probable that Henri Colmet d'Aâge, a handsome young man of twenty at the time, had been involved in the nocturnal 'chasings and escapades'<sup>2</sup> that likewise tied the young painter to Julien Magnin. Vuillard was also friends with Henri's brother, Léon, a painter and decorator at the Ministère des Colonies, where Henri was himself chief secretary. After Léon's death (1915), Henri asked Vuillard to sell the paintings in his studio in the rue Saint-Martin. In the will left by Léon's widow, mention was made of 'paintings signed Léon Colmet d'Aâge' and of 'a portrait of Henri signed Édouard Vuillard'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 19r.<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 5 December 1888, I.1, fol. 23r.<sup>3</sup> Claude Colmet d'Aâge, 'Histoire d'une vieille famille', unpublished MS, p. 74.

I-88



I-89

I-89

# Portrait of Henri Colmet d'Aâge

c. 1889

Oil on canvas, 39 × 31.5 cm

Stamp I, lower right

Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.

The curved back of the dark-red armchair 'supports' the face of the fair-haired young man in a portrait that is very much in the style of the mutual tributes that students of the Beaux-Arts would pay each other throughout the nineteenth century. The archives at the Villa Medici in Rome are filled with portraits of this kind, all in conventional formats and presenting subjects

in stiff poses. Henri Colmet d'Aâge was in the same 'Rhétorique B' class as Vuillard at the Lycée Condorcet (1884-85).



## I-90

## Portrait of Frédéric Henry

c. 1889

Oil on canvas, 28 × 19 cm

Stamp I, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Mme Frédéric Henry, Paris – Philippe Maynial, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 17 Feb. 1984, lot 79, bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 5 Dec. 1984, lot 127 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

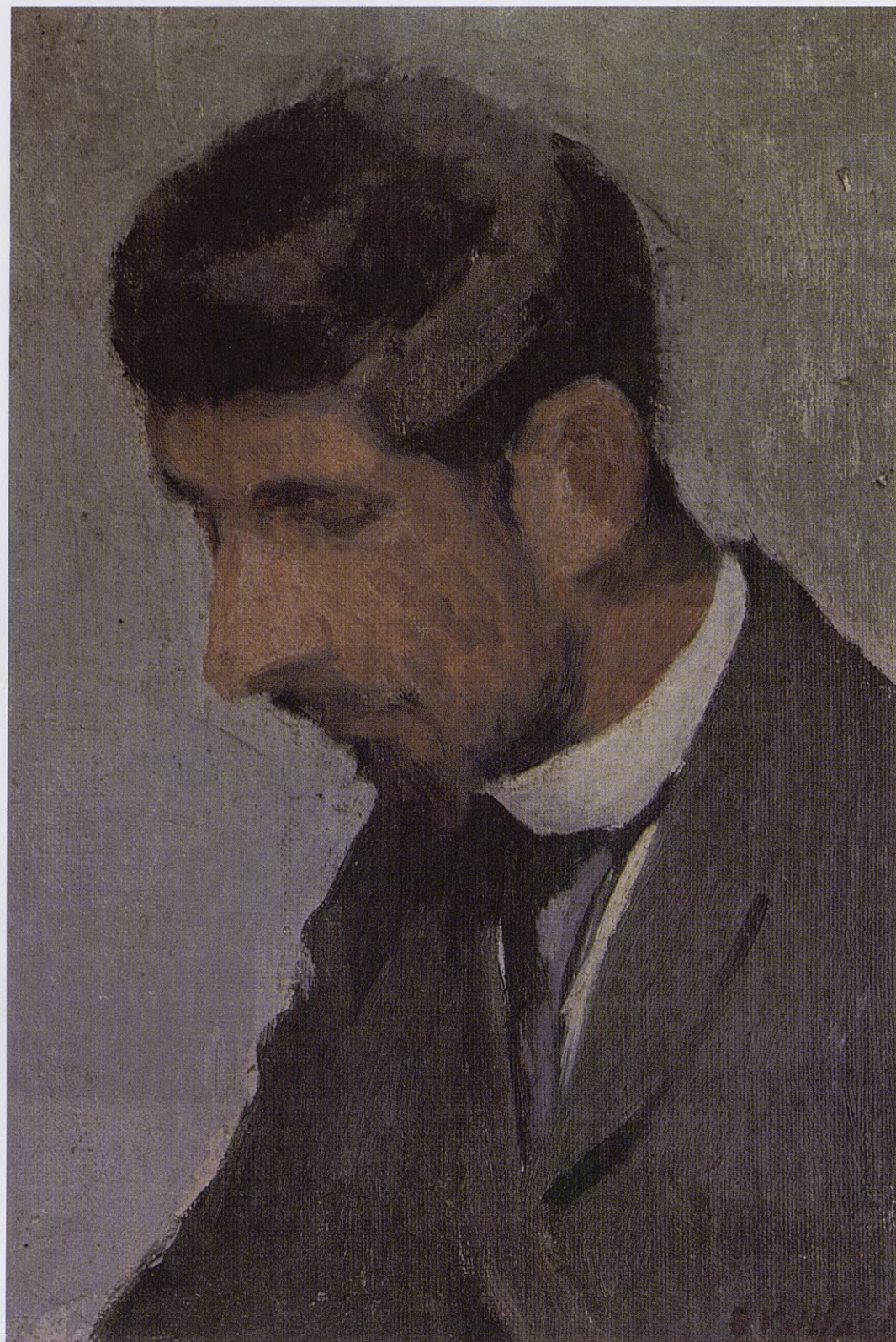
**Description:** A three-quarters study in which the head of the bearded sitter looks down to the left. Hair and clothes black. (JS)

Along with Julien Magnin, Pierre Veber, the enigmatic Waroquy, about whom nothing is known, and the composer Pierre Hermant, Frédéric Henry was one of Vuillard's closest friends. They met at the École des Beaux-Arts around 1887, and Vuillard mentions him four times in his Journal for November 1888: 'Henry comes I pour out my feelings the



E. V., Frédéric Henry and Annette at L'Étang-la-Ville, c. 1900, photograph. Private collection.

whole time'<sup>1</sup> (29 November). And a little further on: 'Henry long chat at home'<sup>2</sup> (30 November). He is part of that group of friends with whom Vuillard would remain in touch for years: 'Yesterday, I was present at a new marriage, Frédéric Henry[s], which presents all the appearances of a perfect match destined to be happy. Bachelors are getting rare and these displays [seem made] to attack them at their very foundations.'<sup>3</sup> A government-approved architect and advisor to the City of Paris, Henry would build the La Jacanette villa for Kerr-Xavier Roussel in 1906-07. He can



I-90

be seen in a photograph taken by Vuillard some time around 1900, in Roussel's first villa at La Montagne, holding the infant Annette Roussel in his arms (see ill.). Having set up house at 8 rue de Constantinople, he was Vuillard's neighbour from 1908, when the latter moved first to the rue de Calais, then to the place Vintimille.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1. fol. 17r.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., fol. 19r.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from E. V. to Félix Vallotton, 26 July 1899, in Guisan and Jakubec 1975b, p. 15.



I-91

## I-91

## Portrait of Julien Magnin

c. 1889

Oil on canvas, 40 × 33.3 cm

Stamp I, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hallsborough, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 7 Dec. 1966, lot 66 (ill.), bought in – Dr. Gustav Rau, Möhringen (Germany) – Sale, Christie's, London, 3 July 1981, lot 320 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 28 March 1988, lot 109 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** London, Hallsborough, 1965, no. 36 (ill.).

Julien Magnin had been a close friend of Vuillard and Kerr-Xavier Roussel ever since fourth form at the Lycée Fontanes (later to become the Lycée Condorcet) in 1882-83. He worked in banking and frequented the

Nabis in the 1890s, and up to his death in 1905. Vuillard paints his portrait in a realistic manner, with a smooth, even surface and clear outline similar in style to Ferdinand Hodler and distinguished by the exceptional intensity of the gaze, which gives no hint of the more deliberately symbolist-style portrait he would paint of him a few months later (see II-26). Magnin is mentioned several times in Vuillard's Journal between 1888 and 1889, and in all likelihood it is he who appears in the *Family Meal* (IV-87) as the well-dressed young man captivating the Vuillard ladies with his charm.

From the few letters in his hand that remain from Vuillard's studio, we can make out a colourful character, less intellectual than his Nabi friends. During an irksome military service, he remarked: 'If I had to do three years, desertion would be a duty.'<sup>1</sup> He was also more adventurous than his artist friends. In 1896, he wrote to Vuillard<sup>2</sup> from Roggen Station, Colorado, to say that he had

become a cowboy, a fact that did not prevent him from communicating his impressions of American art collections: 'in New York there are also some interesting galleries. But in the summer, their proprietors are absent, and it's hard to get them to open these houses for you. At the public museum [sic], I discovered two fine Manets, the woman with a parrot and a portrait of a child.'<sup>3</sup> The same letter also suggests he had literary ambitions, since he enquires of his friend 'whether [he] had asked Natanson for my manuscripts back.' Towards 1900, we see him with Marie Roussel in a snapshot taken by Vuillard at L'Étang-la-Ville (see ill.). He was still corresponding with the family at the turn of the new century; from Kairouan in Tunisia, he wrote to Roussel (22 May 1905): 'Love to all, even to that oddball, Édouard...' (Salomon archives). It was Frédéric Henry who would inform Vuillard of Magnin's death in October 1905. Magnin had kept in his home the mythical Gauguin painting acquired jointly by the Nabis and their close friends.<sup>4</sup>



E. V., Julien Magnin and Marie Roussel at L'Étang-la-Ville, photograph. Private collection.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Julien Magnin to E. V., 11 Oct. 1892, Salomon archives.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Julien Magnin to E. V., 14 Oct. 1896, Salomon archives.

<sup>3</sup> Édouard Manet, *Woman with a Parrot*, 1866, oil on canvas, 185.1 × 128.6 cm and *Child with a Sword*, 1861, oil on canvas, 131 × 93.3 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Gauguin, *Breton Women at the Turn*, 1888, oil on canvas, 72.4 × 91.4 cm, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.





I-92

**I-92**  
**Portrait of Kerr-Xavier**  
**Roussel**

c. 1887-88  
 Oil on canvas, 41 × 33 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower left  
 Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.

Description: *Three-quarters portrait, with the right side of the face in mauve-tinted shadow and a cold light on the temple to the left. (JS)*

**I-93**  
**Kerr-Xavier Roussel**  
**Reading**

c. 1890  
 Oil on cardboard, mounted on canvas,  
 34.3 × 26 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower left  
 Art market, Paris

Provenance: Artist's studio – Arnoé, Paris – Philippe Agnus, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 Dec. 1970, lot 78 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Galerie Morle, Geneva, 16 June 1972, lot 26 – Sale, Christie's, London, 3 July 1981, lot 321 (col. ill.) – Galerie Schmit, Paris.

Exhibitions: Paris, Schmit, 1982, no. 103 (col. ill.); 1986, no. 65 (col. ill.).

Bibliography: Warnod 1988, p. 10 (col. ill.) – Makarius 1989, p. 43 (ill.).

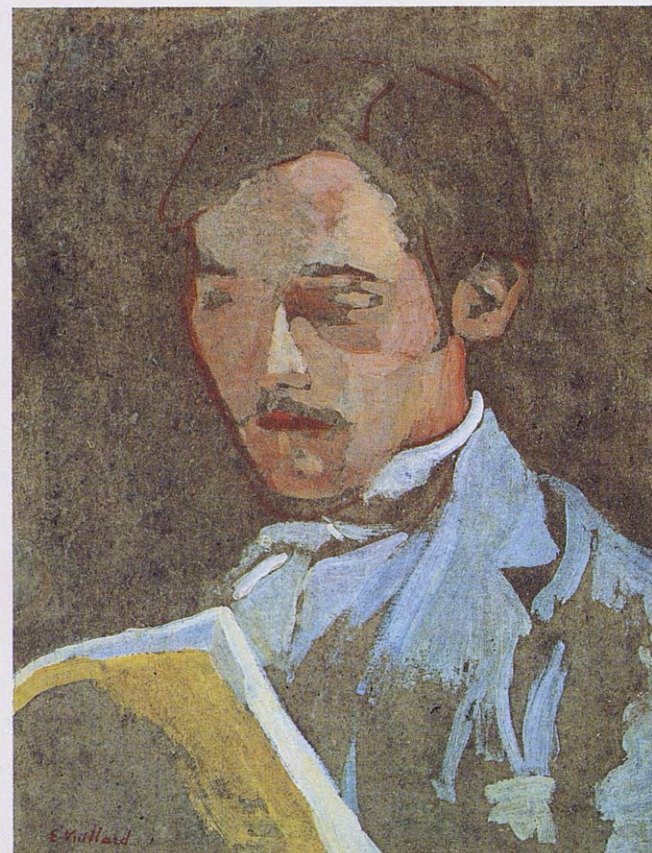
Description: *A broadly sketched study in greys and pinks. The clothing is blue, the spine of the book yellow. The grey cardboard shows through in places. (JS).*

The sketch is very delicate, romantic in appearance. It shows Kerr-Xavier Roussel as a beardless young man absorbed in a book. It puts one more in mind of Toulouse-Lautrec than of Vuillard, not least on account of the cardboard showing through. More than in any other portrait Vuillard made of Roussel (see II-17, etc.), the delicacy of the approach conveys the respect he felt for his friend and future brother-in-law, whom he would admire, while

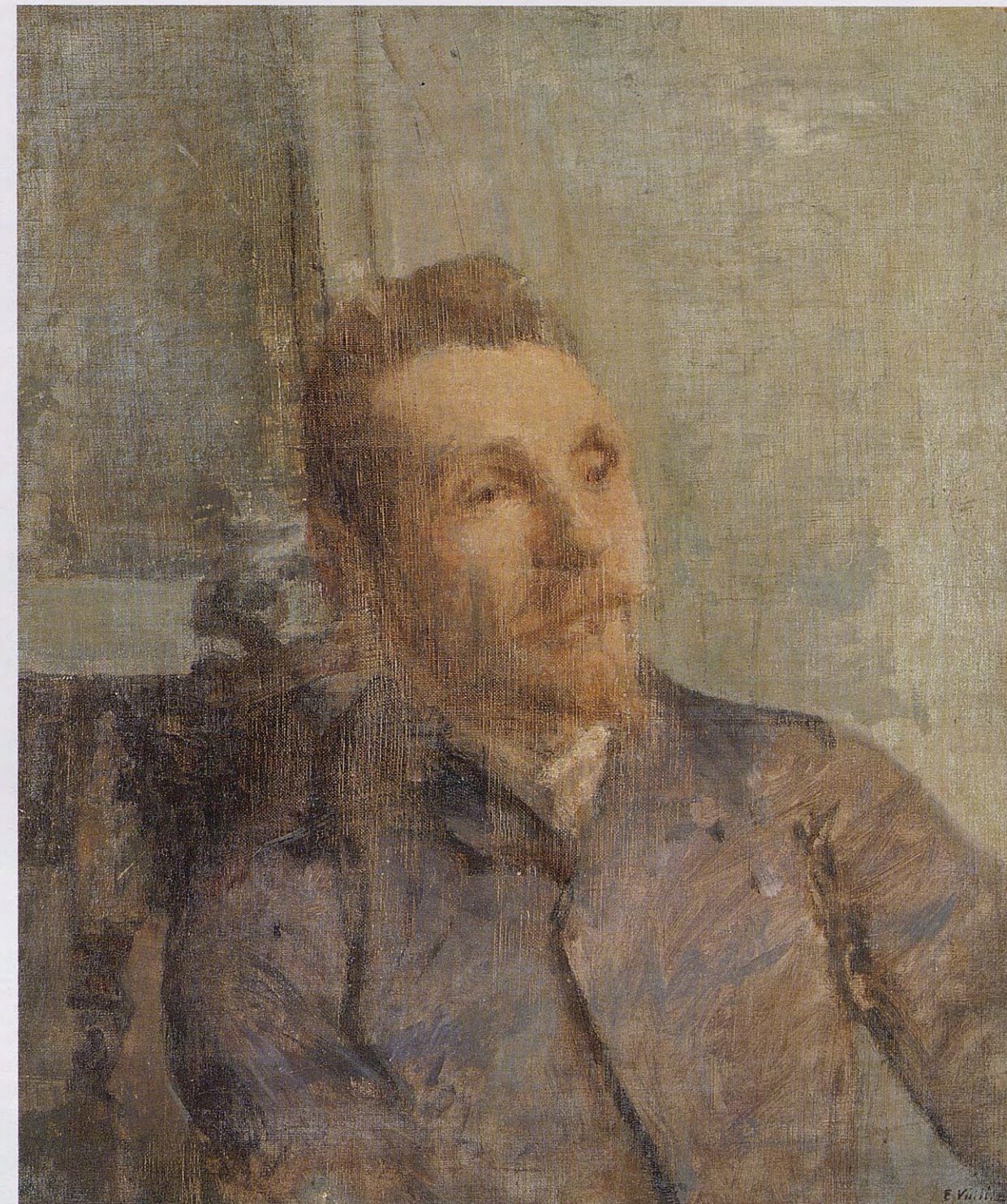
continuing to address him in the formal mode as 'vous', all through his life (see. ill).



Portrait photograph of Kerr-Xavier Roussel, c. 1890. Private collection.



I-93



I-94

**I-94**  
**Portrait of Waroquy**

1889  
 Oil on canvas, 54 × 45 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower right  
 Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.





I-95

### I-95 Vuillard and His Friend Waroquy (sketch)

1889  
Oil on canvas, 25.9 × 15.7 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arnoé, Paris – Jean-Pierre Selz, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 8 July 1971, lot 39 (ill.) – Dian Woodner and Andrea Woodner, New York.

**Exhibition:** Katonah, Katonah Gallery, 1989, no. 2 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, p. 98, fig. 14 – Forgione 1992, pp. 114-115, fig. 64.



I-96

### I-96 Vuillard and His Friend Waroquy (study of Waroquy)

1889  
Oil on canvas, 23.5 × 21 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Inscribed on rear: 1889  
Private collection, Japan

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection, Japan.

**Exhibitions:** London, JPL, 1983, p. 29 (ill.) – Salzburg, Salis, 1985, no. 13 (col. ill.) – New York, Bruton Gallery, 1986, p. 15 (col. ill.) – Lausanne, Vallotton, 1989, no. 9.

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1947, p. 21 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 98-99, fig. 15.

**Description:** A small, early portrait, dated 1889, of a young man smoking a cigarette. For a moment,

one thinks of Carrière: the atmosphere is hazy, the outlines of the face blurred, the gaze as it were veiled. Only one detail stands out, a small splash of red which turns the Carrière into a Vuillard: the glow of the cigarette burning out between the lips of the smoker, piercing the gloom with 'its bright fiery kiss' and casting its light on the edge of a nostril and part of the chin. This red spot is highlighted by the grey background and the subdued pink of the face, reminding one of Mallarmé's line: *Toute l'âme résumée...* ('the whole soul subsumed')

As in the poem, all that remains of the smoker's silhouette is a dim background: smoke clouds and drowns out the forms, but yields to the 'bright fiery kiss' which abruptly overpowers the sensibility and will carry it beyond the suddenly pointless pomp and ceremony of the world.<sup>1</sup> (AC)

<sup>1</sup> Chastel 1947, p. 21.

## I-97

### Vuillard and Waroquy

1889  
Oil on canvas, 92.7 × 72.4 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1955, 55.173

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York, c. 1952 – Alexander M. Lewyt, New York, 1953 – Donation by Alex M. Lewyt to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1955.

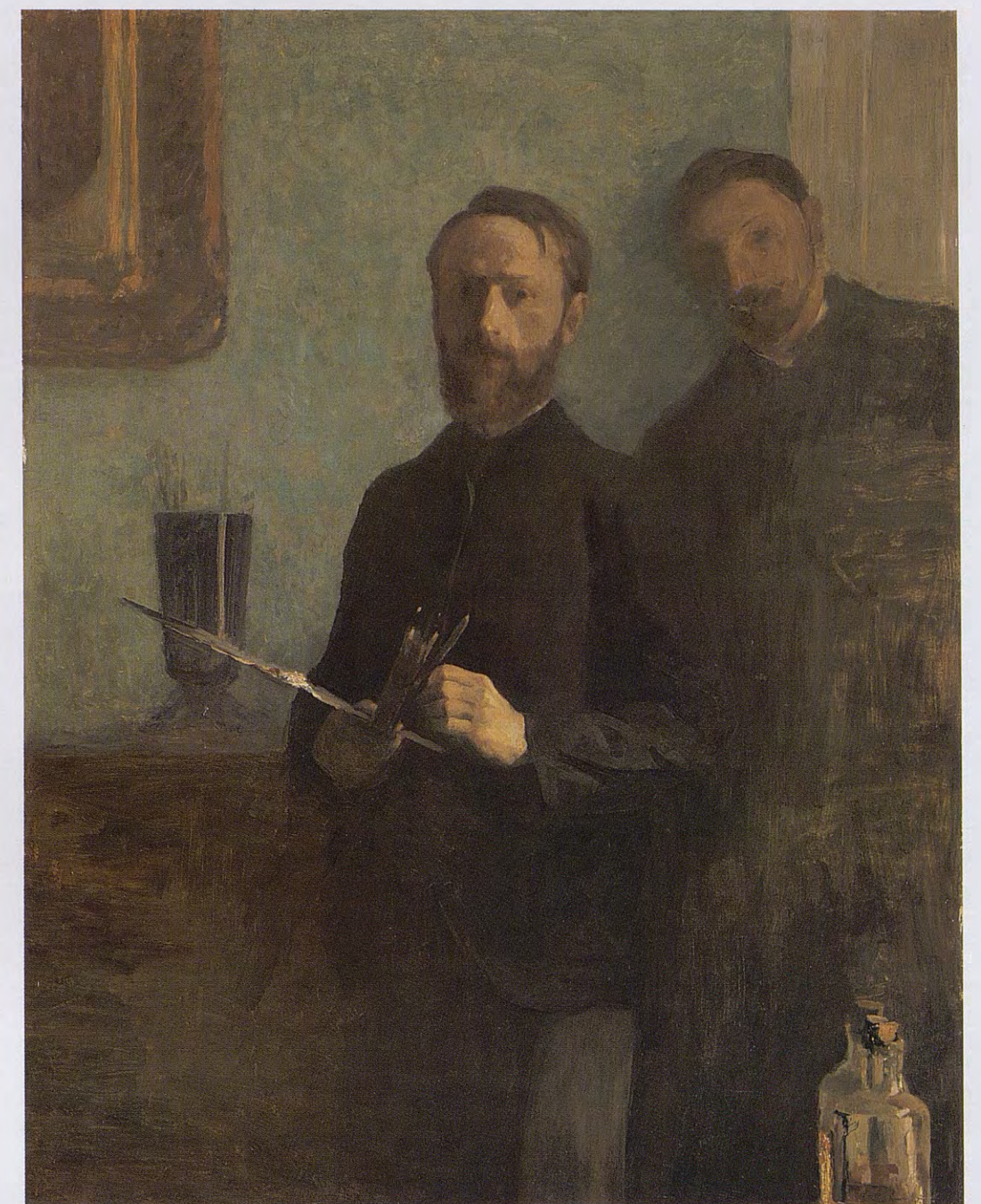
**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 4 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 35 [*Vuillard à la palette*, c. 1888] – Minneapolis, Institute of Arts, 1952, no. 46 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 29 (ill.), 100 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 1, p. 6 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 26 (ill.), 83 – Ritchie 1954, p. 10 – Rousseau, Jr., 1956, p. 198 (ill.) – Sterling and Salinger 1967, pp. 212-213 (ill.) – Preston 1971, fig. 2 – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, p. 16 – Oakley 1981, pp. 5, 17, col. pl. 1 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 91-100, fig. 8 – Thomson 1988, p. 16, col. pl. 6 – Easton 1989, pp. 13-14 – Makarius 1989, p. 82 (ill.) – Forgione 1992, pp. 96, 114-116, fig. 50 – Groom 1993, p. 8, col. fig. 6.

**Description:** Vuillard is wearing a dark jacket and holding his palette and brushes in his hand. His friend stands in the shadows behind him to the right. The background wall is grey-green. Light falls on the side of Vuillard's face, on his closed hand and on two bottles at the very foreground of the painting, at bottom right. (JS)



Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656, oil on canvas, detail. Museo del Prado, Madrid.



I-97

Only the doubling of the bottle at the bottom right-hand corner of the composition discreetly suggests that a play of mirrors is involved. Vuillard has positioned himself and his friend Waroquy next to the commode in *Grand-mère Michaud's* bedroom in the rue de Miromesnil. In his 'autobiographical notes' for the year 1889 the painter writes: 'The portrait of Waroquy in grandma's bedroom.'<sup>21</sup> Even at this early date, Vuillard measures himself against the complex seductions of 'the painting within the painting', exploring the possibilities afforded for depth of field by creating three planes ranging from the sharpest

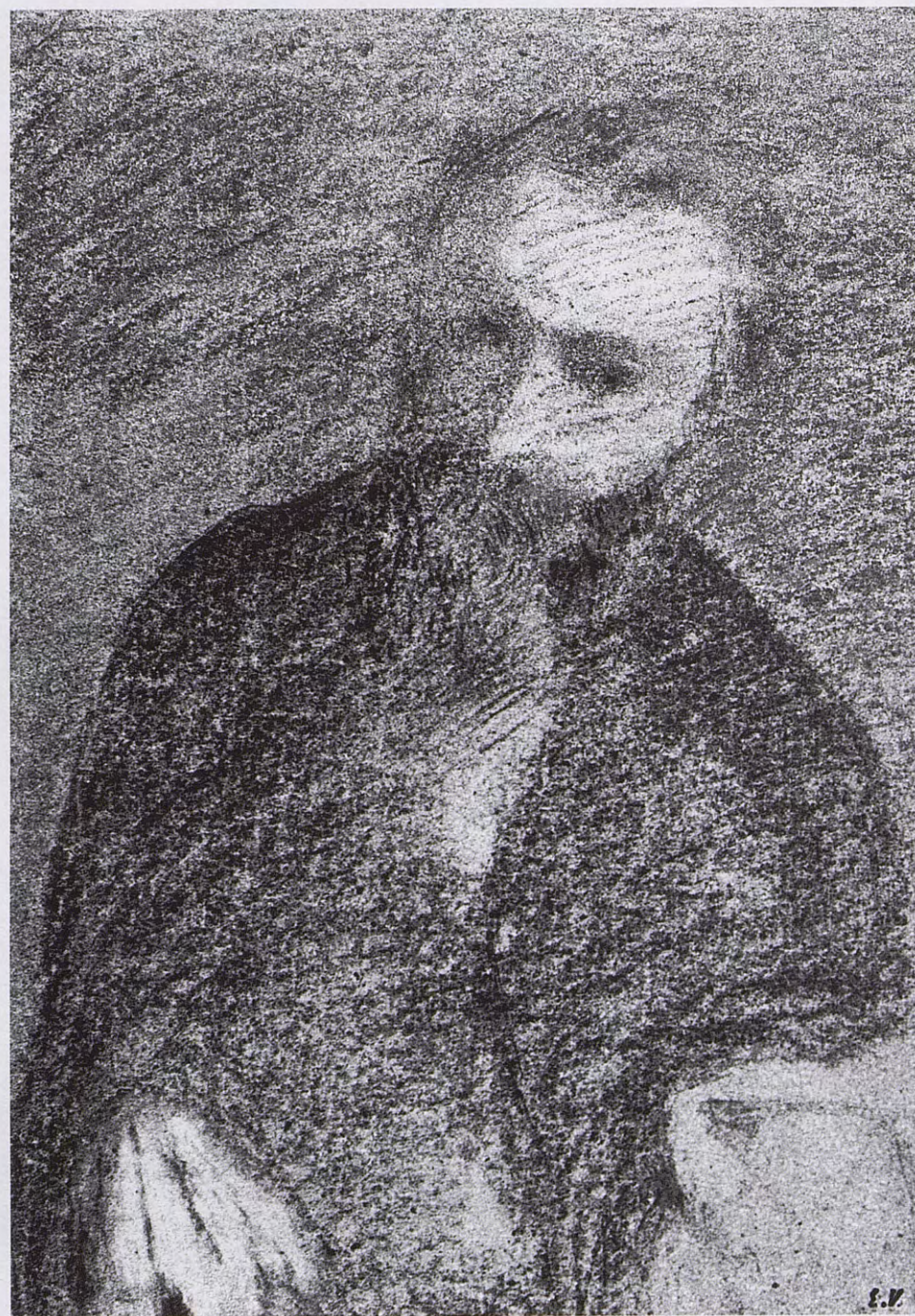
to the softest focus. The fastidious precision with which the bottle in the foreground is captured in a sort of photographic snapshot is quite astonishing. In the middle ground, Vuillard stands with all the confidence of an *optimus pictor*, questioning us with his gaze. In the background, Waroquy is rendered in a soft focus that Eugène Carrière, painting in these same years, would not have disowned. This double portrait can readily stand comparison with other great examples of nineteenth-century art, whether by Ingres or by Hans von Marées. Famous Impressionist precedents likewise spring to mind, such as Manet's *Self-Portrait*.





Edgar Degas, *Degas and Évariste Valernes*, c. 1865, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

*trait with palette*<sup>2</sup> (1878) and, above all, the double portrait of *Degas and Évariste Valernes* (see ill.), where the affirmation of a shared intellectual sensibility between two young painters, admirers of the models of antiquity, is enriched by a homage to the double portraits of the Renaissance; one also thinks of Raphael's *Portrait of the Artist with a Friend*,<sup>3</sup> which Vuillard could admire at the Louvre. Even at this early date, Vuillard makes virtuoso use of semantic and symbolic games. One such is the striking detail of the palette, brandished like a weapon slicing into the canvas in much the same way as the future *Seamstresses* cut fabric with their scissors (see II-104). Even more remarkable is the echo created by the presence of his friend, who forms the emotional *analogon* to the reflected doubling. Refusing the kind of tragic, symbolist stagecraft employed by Böcklin in his *Self-Portrait with Death Playing the Fiddle* (1872),<sup>4</sup> the young Vuillard, more inclined to allegory than to symbol, shows himself to be fully aware of the narrow margins within which pictorial creation operates: since the mirror does not *depict* reality but *repeats* it, the painter celebrates his freedom, his 'share of independence', his 'zone of indeterminacy', to employ Bergsonian terms, by selecting the margins of distance separating objects from one another as indicators of a subjective space. The ultimate precedent for this mysterious, masterly work, however, will always be Velázquez' masterpiece, *Las Meninas* (see ill.), a painting that had acquired mythical status in art academies in the late nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> The similarities Vuillard's posture, bearing and gaze reveal with that of



I-98

the famous Spanish dandy, who is likewise working on a painting that we will never see, gives us to understand that he is reviving the dizzying lesson of the Prado canvas: *it is the painting that gazes at us*, not we who behold the painting.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., *Journal*, II.2, fol. 12r. (11–12 Nov. 1908).

<sup>2</sup> Édouard Manet, *Self-Portrait with a Palette*, 1878, oil on canvas, 85.3 × 71 cm, private collection.

<sup>3</sup> Raffaello Sanzio, called Raphael, *Raphael with a Friend*, 1518, oil on canvas, 89 × 83 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

<sup>4</sup> Arnold Böcklin, *Self-Portrait with Death Playing the Fiddle*, 1872, oil on canvas, 75 × 61 cm, Staatliche Museen, Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

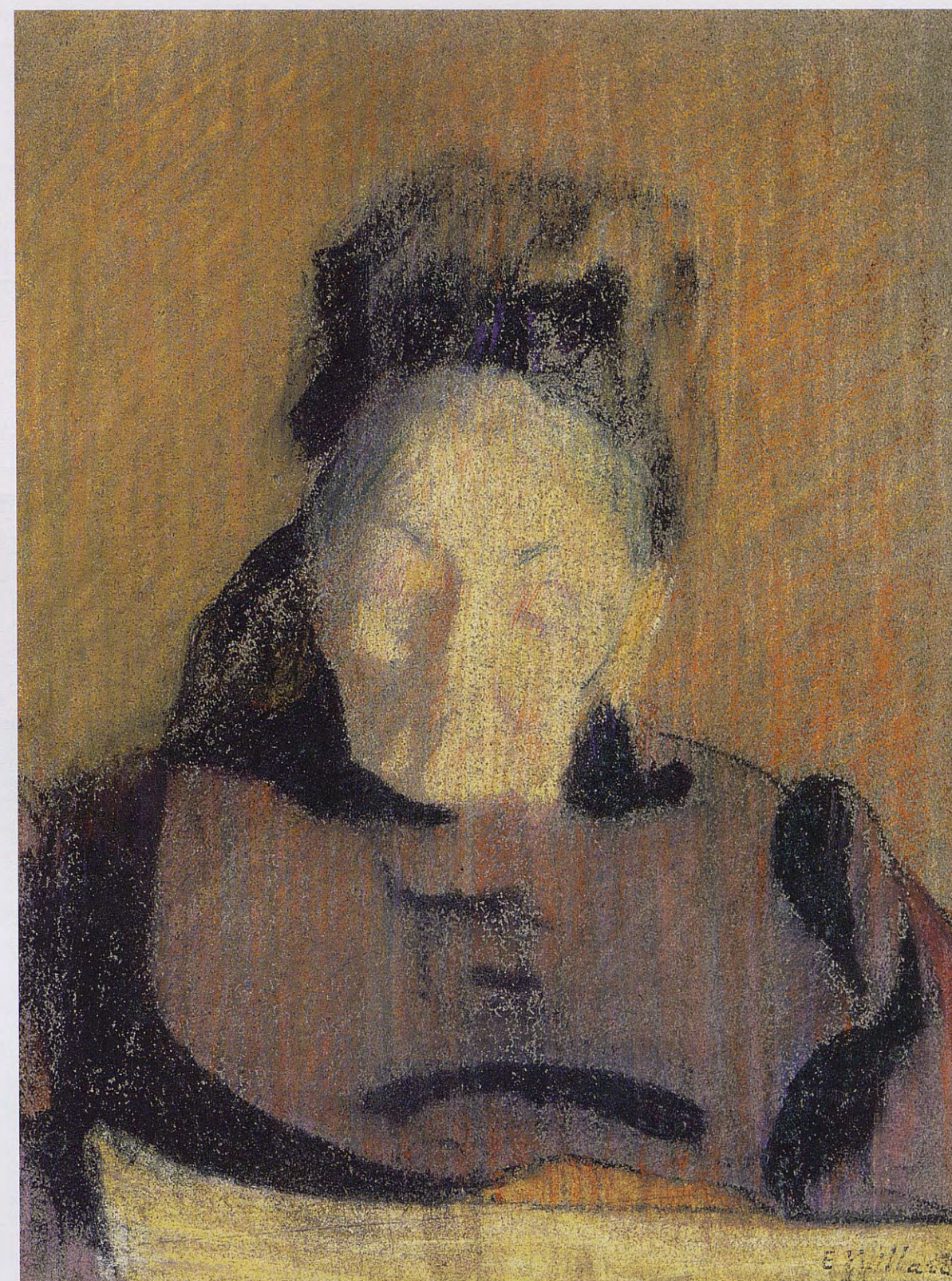
<sup>5</sup> Another reference to Velázquez' *Las Meninas* may be found in IV-215.

## I-98 Self-Portrait

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 26.5 × 19 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79, no. 21.



I-99

## I-99 Grand-Mère Michaud

c. 1890  
Pastel and charcoal on paper, 32.5 × 24.6 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Germany

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Spiess, Paris – Kunsthandel Wolfgang Werner, Bremen (Germany) – Private collection, Bad Homburg (Germany).

**Exhibition:** Bremen, Werner, 1983, no. 8 (col. ill.).



## I-100

## Self-Portrait in a Mirror with a Bamboo Frame

c. 1890

Oil on canvas, 46 × 54 cm

Stamp I, lower right

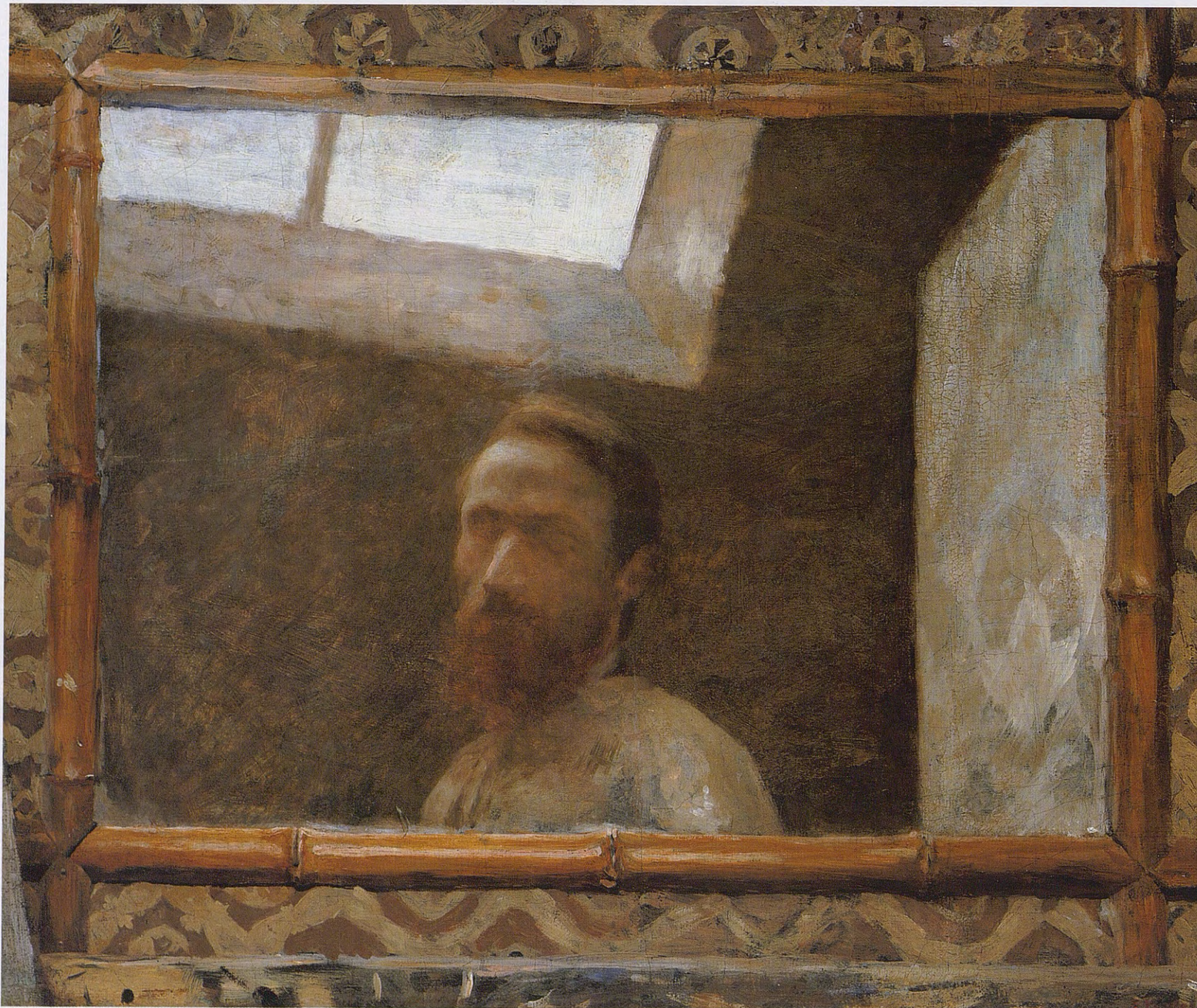
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Norman B. Woolworth, Monmouth (New Jersey) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 31 Oct. 1962, lot 13 (col. ill.) – Stair & Co., New York – Private collection, Beverly Hills (California).

**Exhibition:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 11 (ill.), 100.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 26 (ill.), 83 – Ritchie 1954, p. 10 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 101-106, fig. 18 – Easton 1989, pp. 10-14, col. fig. 4 – Forgone 1992, pp. 113-114, fig. 63.

**Description:** *Vuillard's face reflected in a mirror with a bamboo frame, hanging on beige and green-patterned wallpaper. The skylight casts an oblique light on the walls and the side of the artist's face. (JS)*



I-100

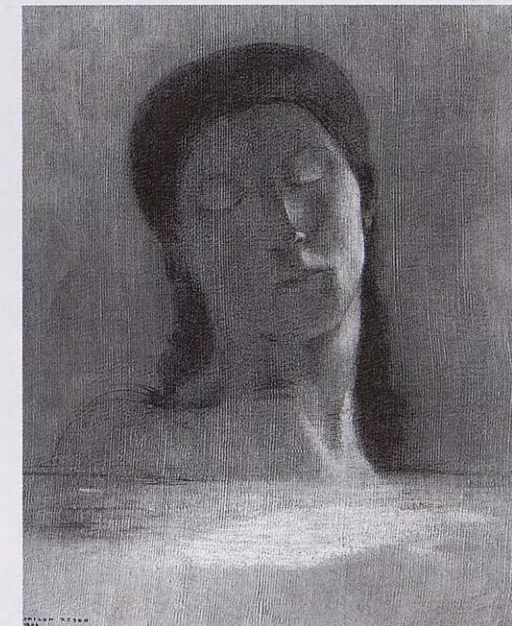
Once again the artist portrays himself reflected in a mirror, but the mode of address has become even more complex than in the self-portrait with Waroquy (I-97). In a cold and silvery early-morning light, Vuillard presents two interlocking realities, one of which occupies the same plane as the picture frame – the very edge of the painting, in other words – and is identical with the surface of the mirror; the other volumetric, with two strongly pronounced diagonals forming irregular (therefore destabilizing) triangular incursions that contrast with the extraordinary calm of the artist. The latter has chosen to represent himself with his eyes almost blanked out, the sign of a hermetic side to his thought. The dreamy face has strong affinities with Odilon Redon's *Closed Eyes* (see ill.), painted around the same time and



Francesco Mazzola, called il Parmigianino, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*, c. 1523-24, oil on panel. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

ber of complex representations of the artist as a dreamy genius, prey to the mysteries of sleep, which are themselves a tribute to the melancholic nature of art in the century of humanism.

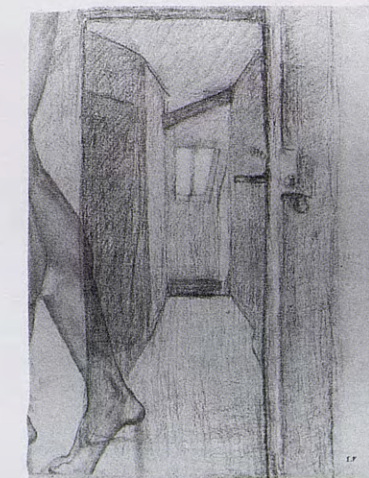
Might we be looking at the attic of Vuillard's apartment (see ill.) at 10 rue de Miromesnil (the entrance to which is perhaps depicted in an unidentified early char-



Odilon Redon, *Closed Eyes*, 1890, oil on canvas mounted on cardboard, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

widely acknowledged to mark the conversion of Edgar Allen Poe's 'black' illustrator to colour after 1890.

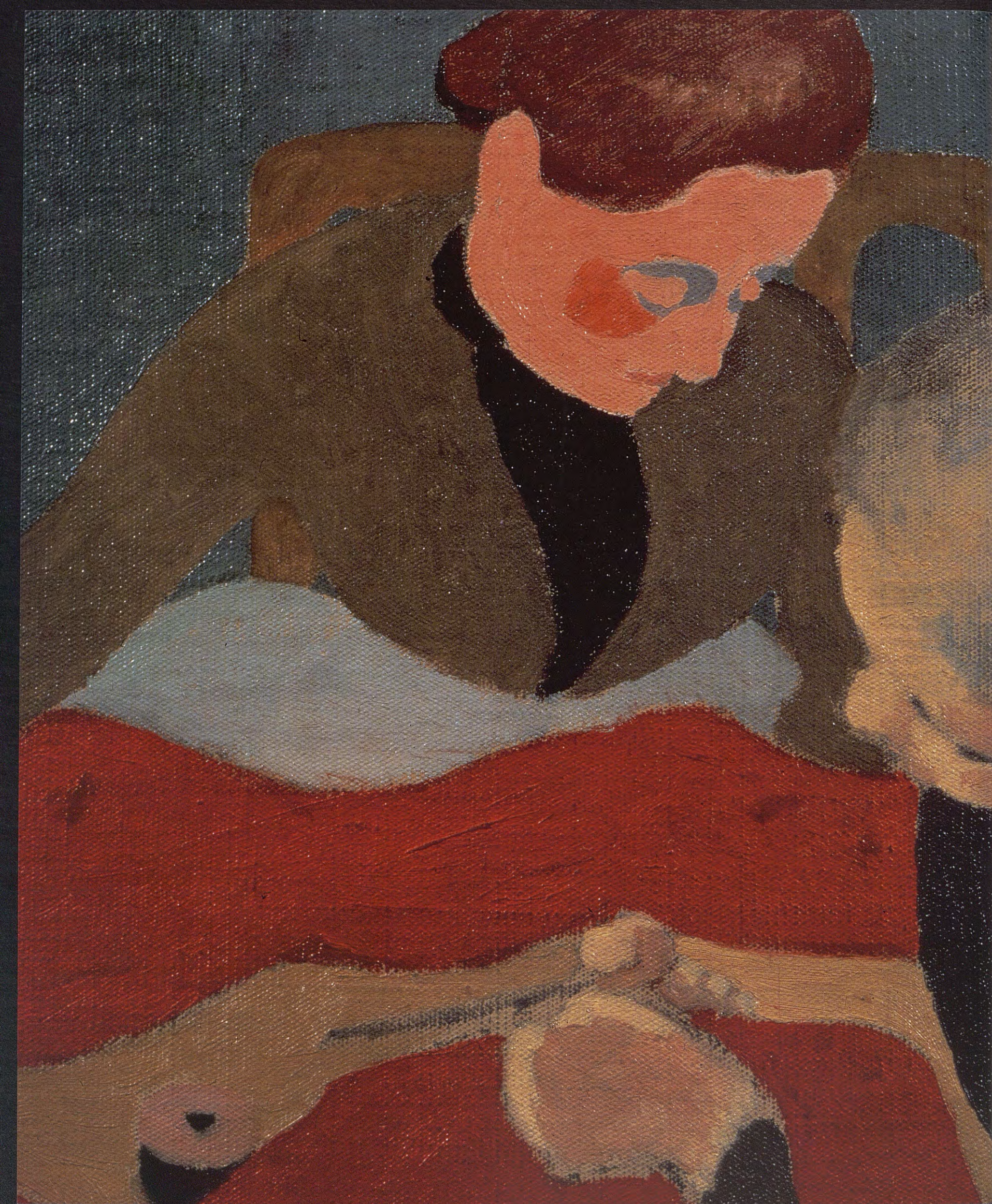
The conceit of the mirror allows Vuillard to articulate the three conditions of pictorial creation – the light shining through the window, the artist's head (the seat of thought) and the reflection that harmoniously unites the whole by marking a distance from it – and, through a subtle form of maieutics, makes the model itself *the very subject* of the



E. V., *The Attic, 10, Rue de Miromesnil*, c. 1890, graphite on paper, 31 x 23.6 cm. Private collection.

coal drawing); or, as is more likely, at the studio which Paul Ranson lent Vuillard during the summer of 1890? No matter. The fact remains that the peculiar atmosphere of the painting, the unresolved area that creates a faint halo around the artist's face, along with the Japanese bamboo frame that combines with the wallpaper to form an Art Nouveau environment, between them indicate that Vuillard was measuring himself against the complexities of composition before exploring those of style.





## II – Acting the ‘Zouave’: Nabi Daring Innovations (1888-92)

*We were habitually in a state of prophetic fervour.*  
Maurice Denis

Vuillard did not join the Nabi brotherhood until 1889. The group, we know, had been in existence since the summer of 1888, when Paul Sérusier brought back from Pont-Aven *Le Bois d'Amour*, a small landscape ‘formless through being synthetically formulated’.<sup>1</sup> Executed under the supervision of the great Gauguin, whom no one then dared challenge, it became a kind of fetish painting for the group, although its importance as a definitive model was perhaps exaggerated during the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> In any case, it seems most unlikely that Vuillard saw it when Sérusier exhibited it before the dazzled eyes of Denis, Ranson and Bonnard. The future creator of *The Public Gardens* was part of the ‘second wave’, throwing in his lot with the group only when the values of the pictorial revolution that was brewing overcame his solitary nature. Denis, the most skilled rhetorician among them, described their early meetings with eloquence: ‘We met periodically around the humble table of a bistro near the studio, in a squalid little mezzanine that Ranson’s imagination turned into an Arabian Nights palace when he talked about us and our feasts, for the sole purpose of mystifying the bourgeoisie. Our discussions were passionate. Each man had to bring an ‘icon’, a sketch whose composition had to be as unordinary as possible.’<sup>3</sup> Vuillard’s Journal for the years 1889-91 is precious, but there is actually little mention of the avant-garde, of Gauguin or of Wagner. It rather reflects the young artist’s interest in the Old Masters of the Louvre, whose legacy culminated, in his view, in the ‘solitary Puvis’. It is significant that when Ranson dropped in on Vuillard one day in 1891 but just missed him, he noted that his friend had ‘gone for a chat with his favourite masters at the Louvre’.<sup>4</sup> But the style and spirit of the Journal sketches changes in 1890. We sense that Vuillard was being swayed by the choices of his new friends, for there are fewer

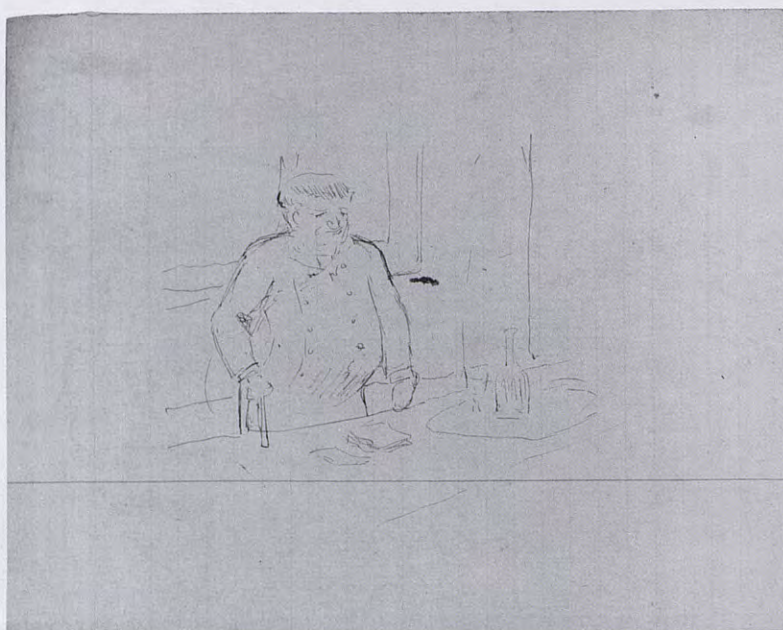
misty images of Paris and intimate lamplit scenes. Instead, notebook I.2 is full of elegant ladies rendered in stylized outline, comical silhouettes (see ill.), city dwellers scurrying across the street in the rain, rats keeping their eye on some cheese, figures for the Théâtre-Libre – drawings in which there are clear traces of Cloisonnism and of Émile Bernard. And the same stylistic shift is evident in the so-called ‘1890’ sketchbook, where Vuillard made preparatory drawings for a number of explicitly Nabi paintings (*The Bois de Boulogne*, II-45; *Grandmother at the Sink*, II-3; *The Dressmakers*, II-104) and sketched a humorous version of a weightlifter demonstrating his prowess in the street (see ill.). One of these images, showing a crowd beneath chestnut trees at dusk, can be favourably compared to Seurat’s *Circus Sideshow*, painted around the same time.<sup>5</sup>

Vuillard would certainly have heard at the École des Beaux-Arts about the revolution that was pitting the ‘big studios’ of Lefèvre and Bouguereau against the ‘small’ ones, of which Sérusier was student-in-charge. In fact, given Vuillard’s unusual personality, the auspicious encounter with Ranson, Sérusier and Denis was virtually inevitable: he must have appreciated from the outset their anti-realist provocations and their artistic and philosophical interests, which were undoubtedly very different from those of the average art student. The Nabi epic actually appeared as a rebellion against the philistinism of the Academy bigwigs, a liberation in the name of artistic coalescence: its advocates loved to spout Swedenborg, Schopenhauer and Édouard Schuré (who had just published his famous book *Les Grands Initiés*) before going to jeer outside Bouguereau’s windows. They all believed in a pure, ‘primitive’ art using flat tints; all rejected subjects rendered ‘in the round’ by modelling. The name Nabi, which means ‘inspired,’ ‘initiate,’ ‘chosen’





E. V., *The Weight Lifter on the Boulevards*, c. 1890, charcoal on paper. Private collection.



E. V., *Caricature of a Teacher at the École des Beaux-Arts*, c. 1889-90, graphite on paper. Private collection.

in both Arabic and Hebrew, was suggested by one of their literary acquaintances, Auguste Cazalis, whom Ranson nicknamed the Nabi 'BenKallyre' ('of halting speech'). The Nebim, 'pure' souls who claimed to be the prophets of a new art, gathered first in a bistro on Passage Brady and later in Ranson's studio on boulevard Montparnasse, especially renamed the 'Temple.' As Maurice Denis was to recall with delight some fifty years later: 'Sérusier had been interested in the Semitic languages since high school. He gave us a name that as far as the studios were concerned made us seem like initiates, members of a sort of mystical secret society,

and let it be known that we were habitually in a state of prophetic fervour.<sup>6</sup> During this period, Paul Sérusier's influence was considerable. Vuillard himself admitted it, noting several times in his autobiographical notes written in 1905 and 1908 that 1890 was 'the Sérusier year.'<sup>7</sup> Basically, Denis, Bonnard, Sérusier, Ranson – and Vuillard – were agreed on the principle of a rhythmic and abstract pictorial composition – a 'flat surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order'<sup>8</sup> – and it is this principle that links a hippogriff by Paul Ranson to a *Breton Eve* by Sérusier or to Vuillard's enigmatic paintings – *The Stevedores*, for example (II-7) – which were invariably translations of contemporary reality. Inspired by the *Talisman*, the paintings of this period were small, but they radiated their own particular eloquence. Bonnard and Ranson even sometimes painted a border around their canvases to establish a transition zone between them and reality.

Vuillard, undoubtedly impressed by the exhibition of Gauguin's work held at the Café Volpini in early 1889, became a member of the Nabi group in the summer of that year, as we learn in a letter from Sérusier to Denis: 'So I envy you when you tell me of the new brother Yahweh has sent to us. May he be welcome. My dream for the future is of a purified brotherhood, composed solely of committed artists, lovers of the Beautiful and the Good, instilling their work and their conduct with the indefinable character that I call Nabi. I am sure you understand what I mean.'<sup>9</sup> Vuillard's remarkable red beard earned him the nickname of the 'Zouave' Nabi. Even though he never went to Brittany during this period to work with the Pont-Aven group, the influence of the Cloisonnism of Émile Bernard and Paul Sérusier is evident in several of the works from 1890 (*Lilacs*, II-28; *Sleeping Woman*, II-125). In other oddly 'stippled' paintings, Seurat is both emulated and satirized. The influence of Maurice Denis's theories was then at its height. When, in 1890, the Nabi 'of the beautiful icons' published his 'Définition du néo-traditionnisme' in the periodical *Art et Critique* (1890), Vuillard wrote in his Journal: 'The purer the elements employed, the purer the work; the more mystical the painters, the more vivid the colours (reds, blues, yellows); the more materialist the painters, the more they employ dark colours (earth tones, ochre, bituminous black).'<sup>10</sup> The coincidence is striking: Vuillard's palette would expand to include strident yellows, teal blue and shrill orange. And so he gave up trying to imitate Eugène Carrière and began finding his own voice. A reinforcement of

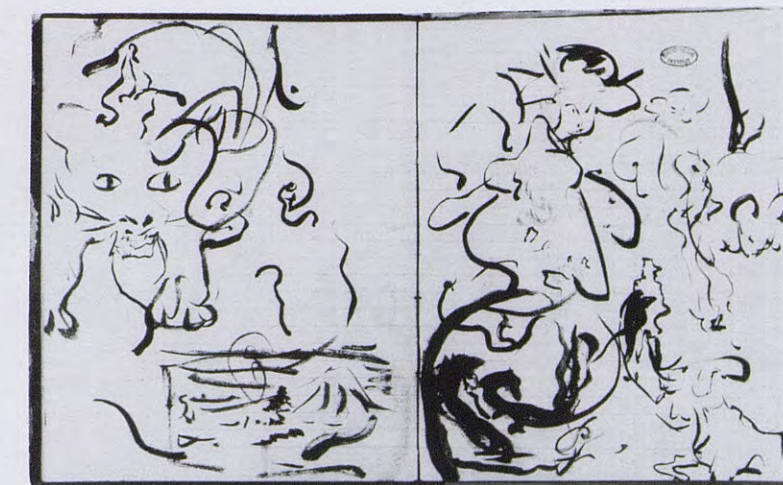


Utagawa Kunisada, *Triptych of the Four Seasons: Summer (show at the temporary residences of Yoshiwara)*. Private collection (former Vuillard collection).

this new approach was his thrilled discovery of the art of Japan. A major exhibition of Japanese prints and illustrated books was held at the École des Beaux-Arts in April of 1890, and the Nabis visited it assiduously, taking careful note of the abrupt framings and powerful contrasts of flat colour. Vuillard's Journal is suddenly full of ink wash drawings: folios 12v and 13r (see ill.) of notebook I.2, for instance, include a close-up of a cat in the manner of Hokusai, a view of Mount Fuji, a geisha, and some rats, and the succeeding pages show several other ornamental washes.<sup>11</sup> Bonnard, nicknamed the 'Japanese Nabi', spoke often of the major impact Japanese art had on him in his youth: 'For just a few pence I could buy pictures on crepe and crinkled rice paper in the most astonishing colours. I filled the walls of my bedroom with this naïve and garish imagery ... Through contact with these crude, unpretentious images I understood that colour could be used to express everything, with no need for relief or shading. I realized that it is possible to translate light, form and character with colour alone, without recourse to values.'<sup>12</sup>

In his later autobiographical notes, Vuillard recalled that in 1889 he was 'starting to work from memory'<sup>13</sup> – less, that is, 'from life'. The canvas thus became the screen on which to inscribe what Bergson would later call 'mémoire affectée'. Another journal passage from November 1888 – very

early on – seems to us extremely important: 'We perceive nature through our senses, which give us images of shapes of colours of sounds etc. A shape a colour exists only in relation to another. Form alone does not exist. All we can understand is relationships ... Practical necessity of working above all from memory, and always to see as a whole the masses the air etc. If the brain's mechanism is not in a state to grasp these relationships, to keep them for a moment and transfer them like a sleepwalker onto paper or canvas, it's a waste of time.'<sup>14</sup> The phrase 'like a sleepwalker' is revealing. Vuillard comes close here to the Wagnerian view of the



E. V., *Journal*, I.2, fol. 12v-13r.



artist as 'connoisseur of the unknown', as the one who proceeds guided by instinct, the one who is able, in the catalepsy required for artistic creation, to transpose exactly the sum of his sensations by, as Gauguin would say, 'acting dumb'. Like all his Nabi co-disciples, Vuillard came from a petit-bourgeois background that paradoxically encouraged the blossoming of creative tendencies. He had the appearance of a serious, thoughtful person. Verkade left a description of him that remained accurate even into his old age: 'Profoundly French (in the style of St. Francis de Sales, whom he greatly resembled), Vuillard was by nature all refinement and tact. He never expressed himself dogmatically for fear of being wrong. We loved all his witty remarks and listened with pleasure to his conversation, which awoke in us all kinds of new ideas.'<sup>15</sup> We can imagine the 'Zouave' being initially reticent about the rules of a brotherhood that precluded freedom of choice. We can see him, just as Vallotton portrayed him in his beautiful woodcut *The Symphony*, devotedly listening to Misia Natanson playing in the salon at rue Saint-Florentin (see VI-38): reserved, unobtrusive, and yet at the same time full of an unexpected dry humour. He was probably rather sceptical about the Nabis' esoteric posing. Neither Ranson nor Sérusier could end a letter without repeating the ritual formula that Vuillard never used: 'in your palm, my word and my thought.'<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, one would have to be blind not to see that at the start of the 1890s Vuillard was more than a little inclined towards the bizarre, that he was even beginning to use mystical language. During the summer of 1890, Paul Ranson lent him his boulevard Montparnasse studio for a few weeks. It was undoubtedly there, surrounded by his friend's creations, that Vuillard became bolder and 'gave himself over to the pleasures of artifice and pure colour'.<sup>17</sup> Works such as *The Flirt* (II-120) and *Dinner Time* (IV-2) - whether probing the mysteries of darkness, balanced precariously between caricature and the macabre, or employing an approach to framing hitherto unprecedented in painting - are astounding, audacious inventions. Vuillard's art was moving rapidly towards the light. Nevertheless, he, even more than the other Nabis, held firmly to the concept of a painting as an *enigma*: an enigma in *The Lady of Fashion* (II-135), a hermetic mystery in *In Bed* (II-123). The deepest meaning of the work, never totally revealed, emerges painfully from *doubt*, the 'doubt, lode of ancient night' conjured by Stéphane Mallarmé a short while before.<sup>18</sup> The shy Vuillard was also an agent provocateur of this 'new' art; he was, prob-

ably more than the others, the champion of 'little ecstasies'. Like Mallarmé, he 'reigned over that family of artists for whom the unfurling of the imagination counts for less than the exercise of the sensibility'.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Denis 1913, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> The Nabis referred to the painting as the '*Talisman*': 'How do you see this tree?' Gauguin had asked, looking at a corner of the Bois d'Amour. 'Is it really green?, then put green, the most beautiful green from your palette; and this shadow, rather blue? Don't be afraid to paint it as blue as possible.' Thus, for the first time, in a paradoxical, unforgettable way, was presented the rich concept of the 'flat surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order'. And so we realized that every work of art was a transposition, a caricature, the impassioned equivalent of a sensation experienced.' *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Denis, preface of the exhibition catalogue *L'École de Pont-Aven et les Nabis*, 11 May-11 June 1943, Galerie Parvillée, Paris, n.p.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Paul Ranson to Maurice Denis, quoted in Ranson-Bitker and Genty, 1999, p. 395.

<sup>5</sup> Georges Seurat, *Circus Sideshow*, 1887-88, oil on canvas, 99.1 x 149.9 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>6</sup> Denis, in Sérusier 1942, p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> E. V., *Journal*, (c. 1905), I.2, fol. 77v-78r. In the entry for 11-12 November 1908 (he had just turned forty), he wrote again: '90 acquaintance with Sérusier' (*Journal*, II.2, fol. 12r.). This does not necessarily mean that he had only just met Sérusier - possibly, rather, that he had become acquainted with Sérusier's theories. He almost certainly encountered him for the first time the previous year, if not before.

<sup>8</sup> The fetish-phrase from 'the definition of neo-traditionism', *Art et Critique*, 23 August 1890, reprinted in Denis 1913, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Denis, in Sérusier 1942, p. 48.

<sup>10</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 31 August 1890, I.2, fol. 74.

<sup>11</sup> Vuillard kept about 180 Japanese prints (by Utamaro, Hiroshige, Utagawa Kunisada and others) in his studio archive. Assembled between about 1890 and 1895, they likely constituted his very first 'collection', and he continued to refer to them for the rest of his life.

<sup>12</sup> Antoine Terrasse, *Bonnard*, Gallimard, Paris, 1967, pp. 10, 24.

<sup>13</sup> E. V., *Journal*, II.2, fol. 12r.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 November 1888, I.1, fol. 12r-v.

<sup>15</sup> Jan Verkade, *Le Tourment de Dieu* (Paris, Rouart and Watelin, 1923), p. 80.

<sup>16</sup> In an interesting letter written by Maurice Denis to Paul Sérusier in 1891, the author hints at the doubts that assailed Vuillard in 1889 and 1890: 'Vuillard (whose serenity and lightheartedness were such a happy surprise to him after three years of turmoil) produces with ease the loveliest things you can imagine, with always an exquisite formal originality.' Quoted in Ciaffa 1985, p. 28.

<sup>17</sup> Chastel 1946, p. 44.

<sup>18</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, in *Ceuvres*, Gallimard, Paris, 1945, p. 50.

<sup>19</sup> Chastel 1947, p. 16.



Self-Portrait with Walking-Stick and Boater  
II-27 (detail).



## II-1

## Self-Portrait

c. 1888-89

Oil on canvas, 38.4 x 46.2 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Nathan, Zurich (Switzerland) – Paul Rosenberg, New York, July 1978 – Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London, Sept. 1978 – Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., Saint Louis (Missouri), Oct. 1978 – Private collection.

**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, pp. 113-115, fig. 26 – Rudenstine 1988, pp. 911-917, no. 309 – Thomson 1988, p. 32, pl. 18 – Warnod 1988, pp. 16, 27 (col. ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 64-65 (col. ill.).

The dating of this self-portrait has long posed problems. The general consensus used to be circa 1892. Ciaffa dated it to around 1894, on the basis of an entry in Vuillard's Journal for 15 July 1894: 'Looking at my face in a mirror. My beard gilded by the light the skin the eyes dull the pupil and its square highlight the forehead somewhat oily, the hair thin and uneven unhealthy of a silvery grey colour, the eyebrows untidy and over-shadowing the eyes. An easy and attentive air.' Yet Vuillard in this picture does not yet have thinning hair, and his thick bushy beard is of the kind worn by the rebellious artists he frequented in his youth, the overall effect being offset by an impeccably bourgeois, well-adjusted collar. He is clearly sitting down: the decorative frieze passes above his head, and a canvas is turned facing the wall. The monochrome background throws his figure into relief and accentuates the deliberately romantic character of the setting. In our view, the style of the picture should be compared to that of his portraits of his friends Colmet d'Aâge and Julien Magnin (c. 1889). It is hard to believe that Vuillard, who was in the middle of his *Public Gardens* period at the time (see V-39), would still be casting dark shadows over his eyes. The distance separating this portrait from the *Octagonal Self-Portrait* (II-25) is, in fact, as great as that separating the two portraits of Julien Magnin, one from 1889 (I-91), the other, 'in



II-1



E. V., Study Sheet with Two Self-portraits, c. 1888-90, charcoal and graphite on paper, 62 x 47 cm. Private collection.

the manner of Gauguin', from 1890 (II-26). The *'Pulitzer' Self-Portrait* should probably be assigned to the same period as *Self-Portrait in a Mirror with a Bamboo Frame* (I-100) or the double portrait with Waroquy (I-97), though the brushwork is much more forthright and self-assured than in either of these two examples. A study sheet with two self-portraits (see ill.) confirms our dating: in one of these, Vuillard portrays himself full-face, with a fixed stare and his hair still thick, as in the *'Pulitzer' Self-Portrait*. The same is true of a second

study sheet, again made around 1888-90 (see ill.), in which he sketches the same type of half-length composition (a rarity among the artist's self-portraits). While this self-portrait could plausibly have been painted between 1889 and 1892, it is above all one of the most successful introspective works of the artist in search of his true personality, tinged here with a black romanticism in the manner of the Italian *scapigliati* or the brilliant Polish artist, Jacek Malczewski, another tireless scrutinizer of his own physiognomy.



E. V., Study Sheet with Half-Length Self-Portrait, c. 1888-89, graphite on paper, 11 x 13.6 cm. Private collection.

## II-2

## Grand-Mère Michaud Seen against the Light

1890

Oil on canvas, 65 x 54 cm

Signed, lower right: ED. VUILLARD

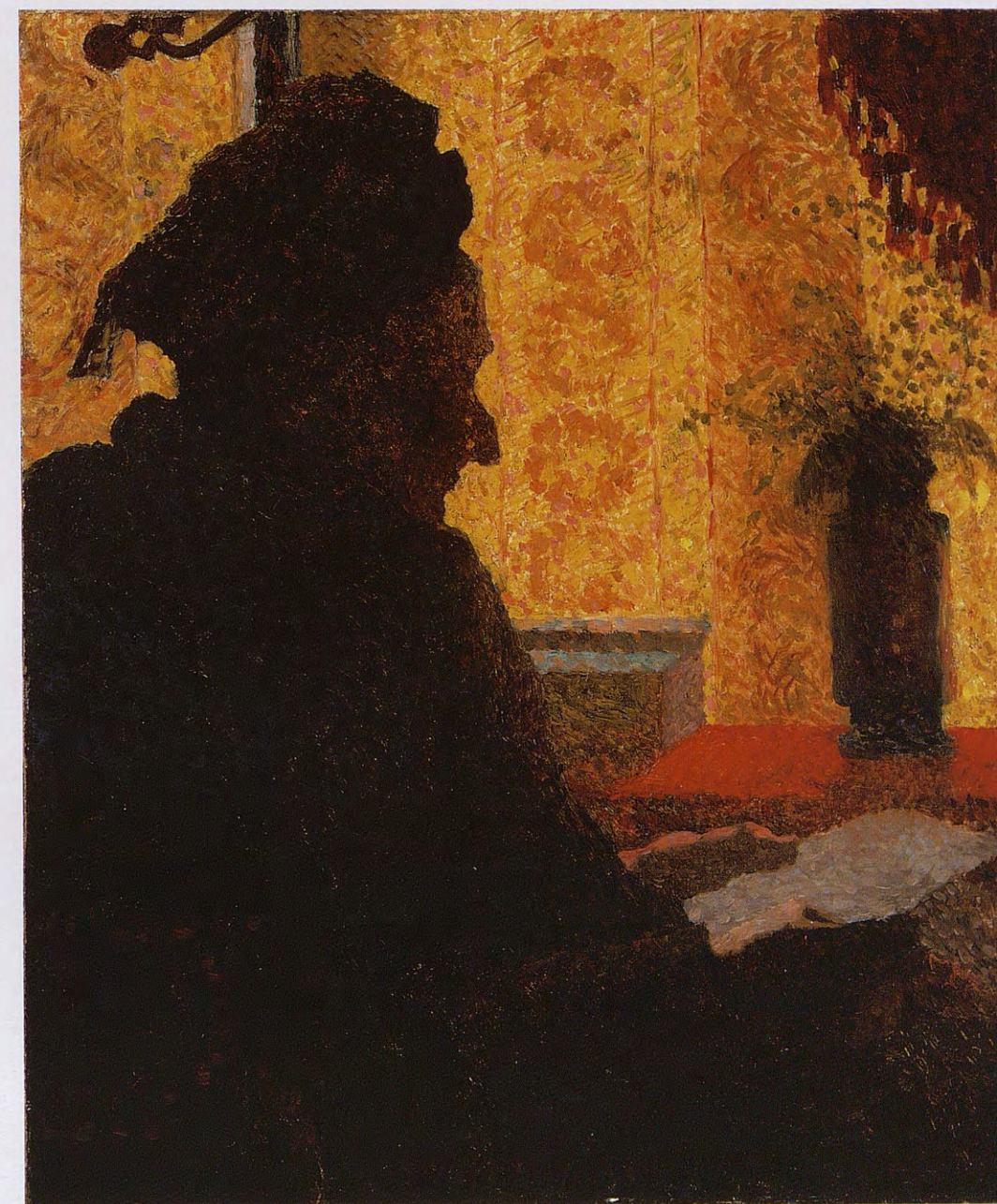
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., HMSG 1987.32

**Provenance:** Artist's studio, Marie Roussel (?); Jacques Roussel – O'Hana, London, June 1953 – Gustav and Marion Ring, Washington D.C., 1953-84; Marion and Gustav Ring Estate, 1984-87 – Gift to the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C., from the Marion L. Ring Estate.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 29 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 51 – London, O'Hana, 1953, no. 49 (ill.) – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101, fig. 52 – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 9 (ill.) – Washington D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1964 – Washington D.C., Hirshhorn 1985-86, no. 50 (col. ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 49 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 35, p. 104 (col. ill.) – San Francisco-Dallas-Bilbao, 1999-2000, no. 402.

**Bibliography:** Preston 1971, p. 27, fig. 32 – Daniel 1984, pp. 164-165, fig. 61 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 168-169, fig. 59 – Easton 1989, p. 73 – Cogeval, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, p. 122 – Forgiione 1992, p. 72, fig. 42 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 64 (col. ill.), 65 – Kahng, exhib. cat., 1999-2000, San Francisco-Dallas-Bilbao, p. 261 (col. ill.).

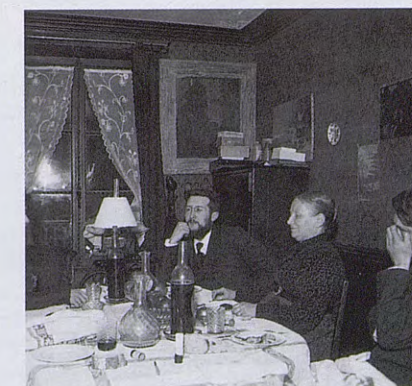
This fascinating composition, today one of Vuillard's most famous paintings, did not feature in his 1938 retrospective. It may be assumed to have remained in the artist's apartment throughout his life, as is suggested by a photograph Vuillard took (see ill.), datable to winter 1901-02, of a dinner with friends



II-2

at the rue Truffaut, in which *Grand-Mère Michaud Seen against the Light* can be seen on the wall above the head of the composer Pierre Hermant. It may be that its importance as a family document, together with its style of execution, judged too 'modern' for the taste of 1940, saved it from becoming part of the Roussel bequest to the Musées Nationaux in 1941. Neither Jacques Salomon nor André Chastel mention it in their inventory of the studio archives after 1940. We may surmise that Marie Roussel, Vuillard's sister, took it to her home some time prior to 1940, kept it there until her death in 1948, and that her son, Jacques, sold it on through a London dealer some time after that date.

The exceptional quality of the painting has traditionally led commentators to push back



E. V., Dinner with friends, Rue Truffaut, winter 1901-02, photograph. Private collection





E. V., sketch for *Grand-Mère Michaud Seen against the Light*, c. 1890, charcoal on paper, 13.5 x 10.5 cm. Private collection.

the dating to the mid-1890s (in the name of 'modernity'). The work does indeed weave together the soft-spoken intimacies of the family home with the more clamorous provocations of neo-Impressionism, then at its height; the influence of Shadow Plays, which everyone who was anyone in the Paris art-world was flocking to see in cabarets like 'Le Chat Noir' can likewise be felt. Possible links with the lighting techniques of Symbolist theatre, which we had ourselves thought to discern in the painting in the past (see Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes cat., 1990-91), no longer seem convincing. What is certain is that Marie Antoinette Désirée Michaud died in January 1893; her portrait, therefore, must have been painted before that date, the likelihood of a posthumous tribute being rather slim. The dating of the picture, we believe, should be pushed back to as early as 1890, making it Vuillard's first unqualified, avant-garde success. Among a group of drawings that can be dated 1890-91 is a rough preparatory sketch (see ill.) similar to a Conté crayon portrait by Seurat of his mother before a window (*Before the Balcony*). In his resolutely Nabi works, Vuillard would no longer depict curtains of this kind, nor windows of this type with their realistic, 'espagnolette' fastenings. Most of his paintings showing the influence of pointillism are more perfunctory and succinct in appearance, such as *Grandmother at the Sink* (II-3) or *Schematized Portrait of Marie Vuillard* (II-4). Here, on the contrary, we have a tactile sense of space, an oriental profusion of details and colours harmonizing together on the picture-surface. Amid the dark mass of the grandmother's silhouette are gleaming blue highlights that bring out her almost sculp-

tural presence in the foreground. In this 'arrangement in gold and black', the dazzling carmine-red of the low table generates a note of pink on the old woman's hand. More unexpected are the artful strokes of turquoise-blue paint on the casket and the purple curtain fringe dripping down from the top right-hand corner. All these shimmering effects bring out Vuil-



Henry Van de Velde, *Woman at a Window*, c. 1889, oil on canvas. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp.

lard's technical accomplishment and profound originality. It is not so much the influence of Seurat we notice here as an affinity with 'second-generation' neo-Impressionists, such as Paul Signac or Belgian artists Henry Van Rysselberghe and Henry Van de Velde. The latter's *Woman at a Window* (see ill.), painted in 1889, has much in common with Vuillard's portrait; indeed, it was presented at the Salon des Indépendants in Paris in 1890, the date at which we consider *Grand-Mère Michaud Seen against the Light* to have been made. Van de Velde's painting, a geometric work that borders on abstraction, draws in great waves of light in a backlit, daytime scene; Vuillard's work, on the other hand, heralds a poetics of closed, cosy interiors in which daylight secretes its own form of darkness. The light filtering through the curtain makes it a closed surface, a glowing golden wall reflecting its own light back into the room.

<sup>1</sup> Georges Seurat, *Before the Balcony*, 1882-83, Conté crayon on paper, 31.4 x 24.5 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

## II-3

### Grandmother at the Sink

c. 1890

Oil on cardboard mounted on hardboard, 22.5 x 18.3 cm

Stamp I, lower right

Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Gift to William Goetz, Los Angeles (California) – Goetz sale, Christie's, New York, 14 Nov. 1988, lot 13 (col. ill.) – Galerie Bellier, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** San Francisco, Legion of Honor, 1959, no. 66 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90 (not in catalogue) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 27, p. 56 (col. ill.) – Berlin, Werner, 1992, no. 2 (col. ill.) – Gifu, Museum of Fine Arts, 1993, no. 178, p. 101 (ill.) – Zurich, 1993, no. 142 (col. ill.) – Florence, 1998, no. 6, p. 45 (col. ill.); and Montreal, 1998, no. 157, p. 26 (col. ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 6, p. 82 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Frankfurter 1951, p. 57 – Rewald 1956b, pp. 418-419 (ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 47 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 22 (col. ill.) – Staller 1994, pp. 346-347, fig. 16 – Cogeval, exhib. cat., Florence, 1998, p. 180 and Montreal, pp. 26 (col. ill.), 115.

The title of this painting, long known as *Grandmother with a Soup-Tureen*, needs to be



E. V., sketch from the '1890' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 13.5 x 10.5 cm. Private collection.

changed, since Vuillard's '1890 notebook' contains a detailed drawing of it (see ill.) in which we see Marie Antoinette Désirée, whom we recognize from her hunched back, busy washing plates in a sink; we can dimly make out some crockery in a large basin, a tap and even a window above the sink, all items that feature in the painting. This small canvas ushers in a series of oil sketches made between 1890 and 1891 in



II-3

which we can see, among other things, the influence of Seurat's 'chromoluminarism'. But Vuillard, though he respects Seurat's work, does not adopt its principles. He confidently stitches together a picture-surface of small, blue and red dots, but on no account reconstructs the scene in conjunction with an optical mix. The 'smudges' Vuillard uses to create space swirl like a host of locusts about the room, with denser layers of pigment added in places to outline volumes, including that of *grand-mère* Michaud herself, who, despite everything, remains recognisable. Of particular note is the avant-garde signature of the window, embedded in the surroundings like a cambered surface, a superimposed emblem blazoning an escutcheon in space. It clearly



Utagawa Kunisada, *A Geisha from Edo Street*, print, 37.8 x 25.4 cm. Private collection.

calls to mind a print in Vuillard's collection by Utagawa Kunisada, in which a kakemono on the wall gives the illusion of a window framing a real landscape (see ill.). It also recalls

Seurat's manner of suspending mysterious objects in space – the lotus flower in *Le Chahut*,<sup>1</sup> for example, which Ranson seems to have had in mind when painting *Lustral*,<sup>2</sup> in both cases, the heraldic motifs are embedded in the surface of the canvas. It might come as a surprise that the artist's grandmother, guardian of the family past, should be made to underwrite the more extreme, avant-garde experiments of Vuillard's art, and it is here, no doubt, that Vuillard's more provocative, anti-conformist side is lurking.

<sup>1</sup> Georges Seurat, *Le Chahut*, 1889-90, oil on canvas, 171.5 x 140.5 cm, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo (Netherlands).

<sup>2</sup> Paul Ranson, *Lustral*, 1891, encaustic on canvas, 35.5 x 24.2 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



## II-4

Schematized Portrait  
of Marie Vuillard

1890

Oil on canvas, 92 x 73.5 cm

Signed, upper left: ED. VUILLARD

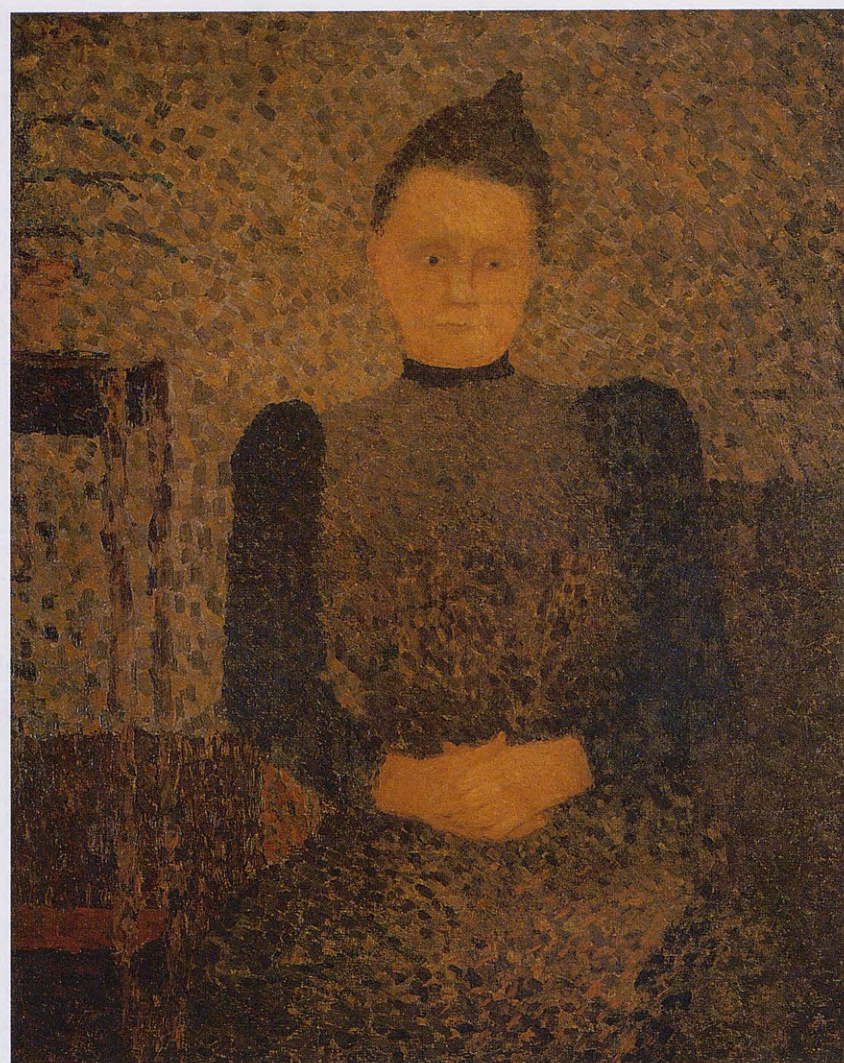
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, London, c. 1960 – Robert Carrington, Malibu (California), 1972 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 2 May 1974, lot 215 (col. ill.) – Galerie La Boétie, New York – Galerie Claude Bernard, Paris, c. February 1982 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 24 June 1986, lot 25 (col. ill.), bought in.

**Exhibitions:** London, Wildenstein, 1960, no. 52 – London, Fischer Fine Art, June–July 1972, no. 90 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Cogeval 2002, p. 22.

**Description:** Face and hands executed in flat tints, brown background dotted with ochre and grey. (JS)



II-4

A note in Vuillard's Journal for 9 September 1890 must indirectly refer to this portrait of Mimi, the nickname he gave to his sister: 'Need for awareness of the emotional subject, the emotion given off by the lines, dots and colours; the painting contemplated calmly in order to feel it but this calm independent of the emotion given off by the picture, in other words, don't think that lines or colours give an impression of calm, they can on the contrary be motifs corresponding to sensations of noise and movement; insist on all these terms; another time working on portrait of Mimi I confused the mood I was in with the emotional expression of my painting and so with what I had going through my head could only understand or at least admit into my theory things that had a character corresponding to calm impressions'.<sup>1</sup> To see in this picture the *Mimi in Yellow* to which Vuillard alludes in his Journal of 2 September,<sup>2</sup> on the other hand, is more than hazardous. Nothing in the chaotic lines we find there has the slightest bearing on the 'schematized' portrait in question: 'what there is on the canvas, superficial and the only thing to affect our gaze, is not very much (old paintings); but what

little there is must be thought out completely, forms and colours (the old idea of the intentional); the diligence, the excitement then becomes a matter of great patience and care and that's all an art-work is. Already put into practice six months ago. (portrait of Mimi in yellow)'. This hasty interpretation, however attractive it might be, is not really convincing, simply because the presence of yellow is not overwhelming in the painting: at most, it is blended with secondary colours like green or ochre, just as it also appears in Marie's flesh-tones. This is not much to go on. Would Vuillard have named the work *Mimi in Yellow* all the same, ironically as it were? It seems doubtful. A study made on cardboard (see ill.) in which only the silhouette of his sister is seen, briefly sketches three types of background: one green, the second brown, the other one ochre. Again there is no trace of yellow. Had the painter wished to call attention to the

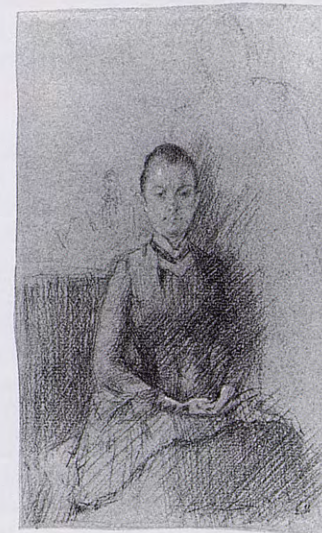
dominant colour of the painting, he would have called it '*Mimi in Ochre*' or '*Mimi in Bistré*'. Perhaps he was referring instead to



E. V., preparatory sketch of *Schematized Portrait of Marie Vuillard*, oil on cardboard, 24.8 x 22 cm. Private collection.

a painting or pastel drawing that has since been lost. It is likely that Vuillard destroyed certain works with which he was not satis-

fied at the time. This deliberately awkward portrait appears much less studied than *Grand-Mère Michaud Seen against the Light* (II-2). The same year, Vuillard had drawn a Conté crayon portrait of his sister that is something of a caricature, in which the poor Marie, self-conscious and surly, looks like one of the daughters of Monsieur Fenouillard, Artémise and Cunégonde, drawn by



E. V., *Portrait of Marie Vuillard*, 1890. Conté crayon and white crayon on paper, 20 x 12.2 cm. Private collection.

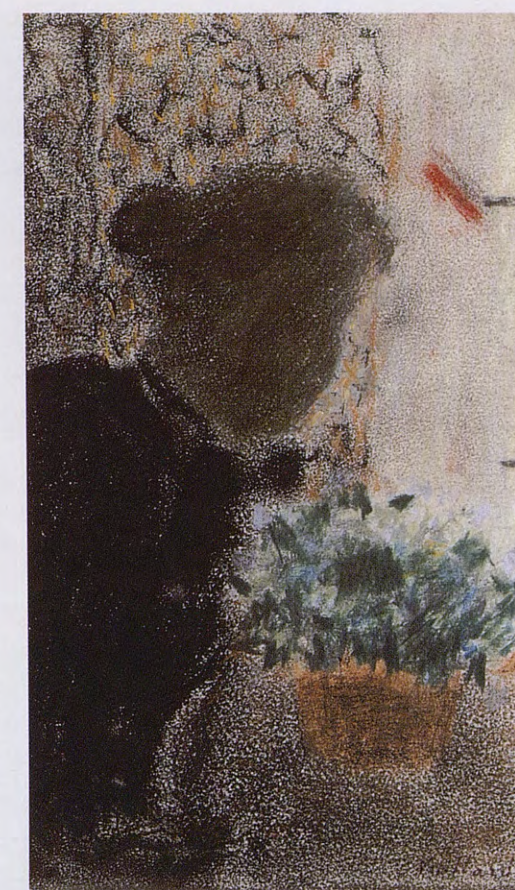
Christophe (Édouard Vuillard, *Portrait of Marie Vuillard*, priv. coll.). Another crayon drawing (see ill.), in which the characteristically stiff-backed sitter seems almost embar-



E. V., *Portrait of Marie Vuillard*, sketch for the *Schematized Portrait*, 1890, graphite on card, 31.5 x 24.2 cm. Private collection.

rassed at being observed, is clearly a study for the 'schematized' portrait. In true Syn-

thetist style, Vuillard exaggerates the features, concealing nothing of his sister's ill-ease. Neo-Impressionism, on the other hand, he uses as a transparent, decorative syntax to conceal a reality largely conceived in Synthetist terms. In this he resembles Maurice Denis in such compositions as *Young Girls under the Lamp*<sup>3</sup> or *Self-Portrait under Trees*,<sup>4</sup> though the 'painter of fine icons', as he was called, shows rather more sophistication than Vuillard does in his portrait of his sister or in *Grandmother at the Sink* (II-3). The emaciated plant just visible to Mimi's left is treated in the same manner as the plants in the paintings Maurice Denis was making at that time (for example, the beaded *jambes de lys* in the pointillist version of *Catholic Mystery*,<sup>5</sup> dated 1890). As we have seen, it is among the Nabis that we must look for a correspondence to the peculiar style of this painting, or, alternatively, one of the lesser-known neo-Impressionists, such as Dubois-Pillet, whose *Portrait of a Young Lady in a White Dress* (see ill.) is strikingly similar to the studied stiffness of Vuillard's painting.



II-5

## II-5

Marie by the Window,  
with Hyacinths

c. 1890

Pastel on paper, 24.5 x 14 cm

Stamp I, lower right

Private collection, Great Britain

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Hôtel Loudmer-Poulain, Paris, 24 Feb. 1980, lot 223 (ill.) – La Cave, Paris – Sale, Hôtel des Ventes, Enghien-les-Bains, 29 March 1981, lot 59 (ill.) – Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London – Thomas and Anthea Gibson collection, London.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, La Cave, 1980, no. 33 – London, Gibson, 1985, p. 18.



Albert Dubois-Pillet, *Portrait of a Young Lady in a White Dress*, c. 1890, oil on canvas. Musée d'Art et d'Industrie, Saint-Étienne.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 55v.-56r.

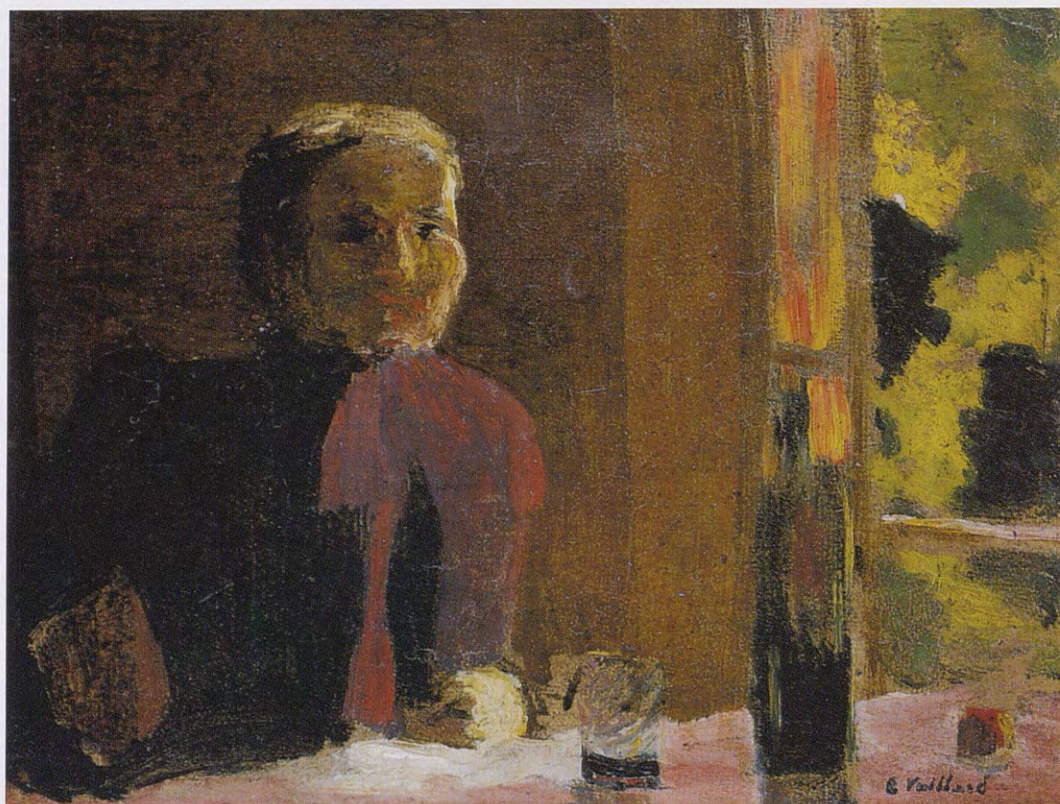
<sup>2</sup> Ibid., fol. 56v.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Denis, *Young Girls under the Lamp* or *The Two Sisters under the Lamp*, 1891, oil on canvas, 37 x 66 cm, priv. coll.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Denis, *Self-Portrait under Trees*, c. 1891, oil on canvas, 215 x 80 cm, priv. coll.

<sup>5</sup> Maurice Denis, *Catholic Mystery*, 1890, oil on canvas, 51 x 77 cm, priv. coll.





II-6

## II-6

### Madame Vuillard at the Dinner Table

c. 1888

Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas,  
27 × 34.5 cm

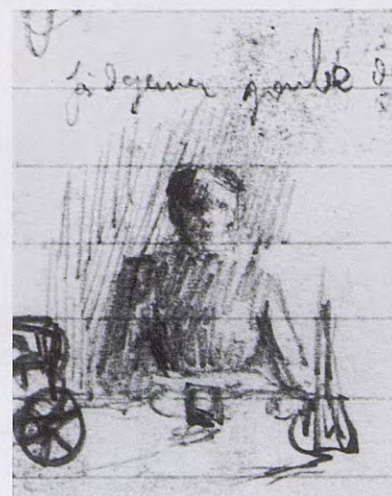
Stamp 1, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arnoé, Paris – Galerie Robert Schmit, Paris, 1982 – Ambroise Waroquet – Sale, Hôtel des Ventes, Enghien-les-Bains, 21 Nov. 1989, lot 9 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Palais de l'Europe, Le Touquet, 3 June 1990 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Schmit, 1982, no. 104 (ill.).

The artist made a very detailed sketch of this work in his *Journal* for 2 December 1888.<sup>1</sup> We must therefore move back four years the date traditionally attributed to this small painting, in which the tenebrist atmosphere is counterbalanced by intermediary shades like purple and pink. Of particular note are the delicate red highlights on Madame Vuillard's face, a detail also employed in the dou-

E. V., *Journal*, I.1, fol. 20v.

ble portrait with Waroquet (I-97) and *Self-Portrait in a Mirror with a Bamboo Frame* (I-100), made around the same period. The trees in the courtyard outside the window make a superb abstract decorative panel, very much in the Nabi style of the Vuillard to come.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 2 Dec. 1888, I, 1, fol. 20v.

## II-7

### The Stevedores

c. 1890

Oil on canvas, 45 × 61 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – E. J. Van Wisselingh, Amsterdam – Arthur G. Altschul, United States, 1986 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 17-18 Nov. 1998, lot 274 (col. ill.) – Vicente Madrigal collection, New York.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Wildenstein, 1953, no. 110 – London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 109 [*The Coalers*] – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 190 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 186 [*Les Charbonniers au bord de la Seine*] – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 5 (ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 4 – London, Tooth & Sons, June 1966, no. 11 (ill.) – New York, Guggenheim, 1968, no. 119 (ill.) – Berkeley, University Art Museum, 1970-71, no. 303 – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 1 (col. ill.) [*The Dockers*] – London, Royal Academy, 1979-80, no. 231 (col. ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1980, no. 144 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Dorival 1957, p. 21 – Salomon 1961, p. 26 (col. ill.); and 1968, p. 44 (col. ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, p. 21 – *Observer Magazine*, 18 Nov. 1979, p. 74 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 47 – Boyle-Turner 1983, p. 41 – Kelder 1986, col. fig. 196 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 22, 24-25 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, p. 8, col. fig. 7.

**Description:** *A wharf, a few sacks and a cart on either side of which can be seen the silhouettes of two dockers, the whole rendered in multicoloured pointillist blocks. To the right is what appears to be a mound of ochre-coloured sand dotted with red and, above this, a light-coloured mass suggesting smoke from a tug. (JS)*

Taking as his starting-point a naturalistic subject that might equally have inspired Zola or the composer Alfred Bruneau, Vuillard achieves one of his most enigmatic paintings, perhaps under the powerful influence of Paul Ranson during the summer of 1890, or perhaps earlier still, judging by the sketches from his *Journal* for autumn 1889 (see ill.). The scene, which probably takes place at night, shows two dockers on a quayside by the Seine unloading large sacks of sand from a tip-cart. This will have been a very common sight in Paris



II-7

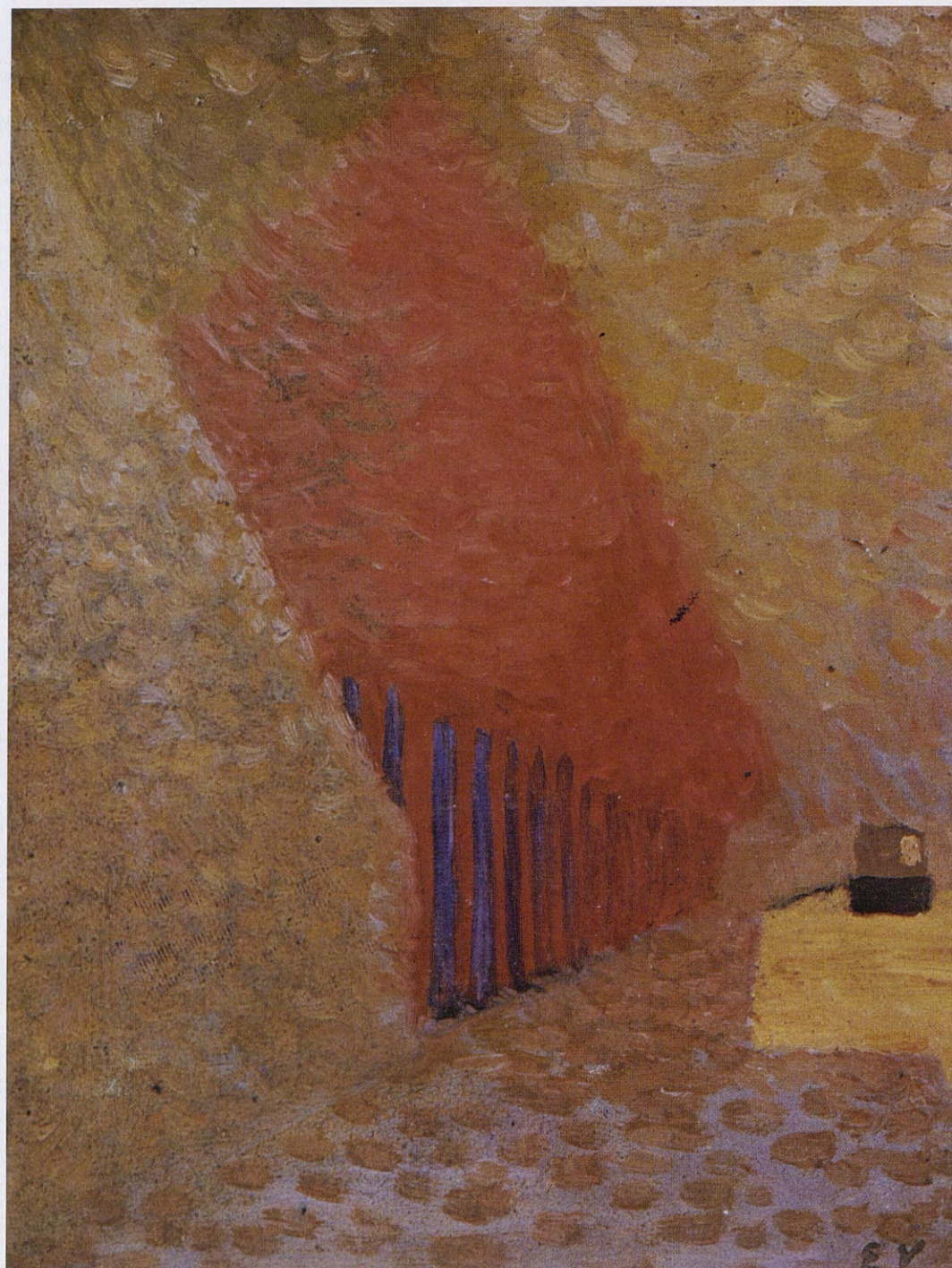
E. V., *Journal*, I.1, fol. 22v.Armand Guillaumin, *Pont-Marie Seen from Quai d'Anjou*, 1883, oil on canvas. Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva.Félix Vallotton, *Heap of White Sand*, 1901, oil on canvas. Villa Flora, Winterthur.

at the end of the nineteenth century, and it often inspired such painters as Armand Guillaumin or Félix Vallotton, whose more realistic compositions (see ills.) help us unscramble the scene 'synthesised' by Vuillard. The picture-space has been divided into four horizontal, parallel bands showing the quays, the Seine, the opposite bank and the night sky in an almost abstract manner. We recognize smoke from a tug, a mound of sand in the bottom right-hand corner and the silhouette of one of those heavy tip-carts peculiar to the quays of the

Seine at that time (see II-46). The sturdy bodies of the dockers, highlighted by dots of red designed to indicate their mass, are deliberately blended with the sacks of sand. Vuillard has transformed what might easily have been a picturesque sketch of Parisian small-trade existence into a dizzying intellectual construct which has no equivalent in the neo-Impressionist painting of the time and which seems to foreshadow the experiments made by Pieter Mondrian or Johannes Sluijters between 1907 and 1909, when 'chromoluminarism'

finally fell apart under the pressures of then-nascent abstract painting. As in his fragmented portrait of *grand-mère* Michaud (II-3), Vuillard presents us with one of the most far-reaching experiments in pointillist technique, breaking down matter to a degree that risks rendering space unrecognisable. The Nabi painter was probably alone at the time in practising so dizzyingly hermetic an art.





II-8

## II-8 The Banks of the Seine

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard, 23 × 18.5 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Lefevre, London – Jacques Dubourg, Paris, 1957 – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 10 Dec. 1981, lot 95 (col. ill.) – Jean-Claude Bellier, Paris – Jan Krugier, Geneva, c. 1982 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 113 [*The Seine and the Landing Stage*] – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 194 – London, Lefevre, May–June 1956, no. 24 (ill.).

**Description:** *A curious experiment in the rendering of fog. To the right is a glimpse of the river, painted in yellow and sectioned off by the quay, and beside it the green and brown outline of a landing-stage. To the left is the embankment wall with a stairway leading down to the river and a conical mass of red trees with blue trunks. Lemon-yellow sky in gradations of colour. Mauve path with patches of beige.* (JS)

As familiar with the banks of the Seine as his contemporaries Émile Bernard, Armand

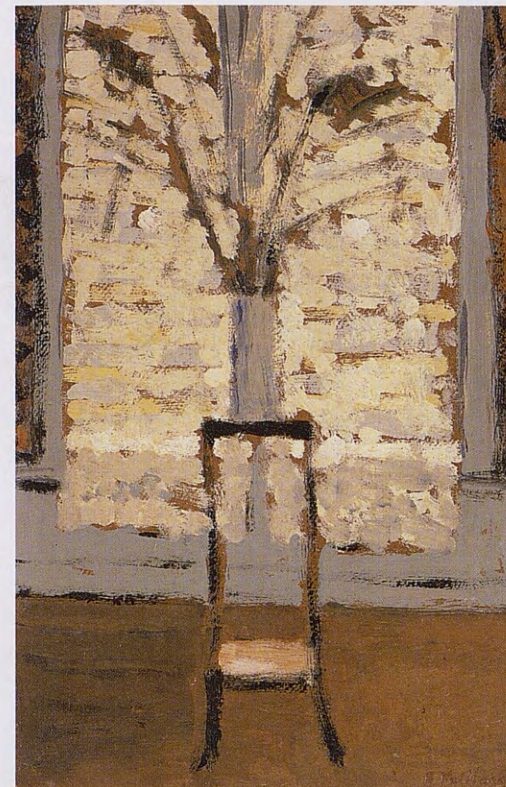
Guillaumin or Paul Signac (though more attached to the Right Bank where the Louvre is to be found), Vuillard here presents an atmospheric synthesis in the manner of Paul Sérusier's *Talisman*,<sup>1</sup> but revised and updated, so to speak, by pointillism. The trees are red. The stairs, the quay and, in the background, the landing-stage for passenger boats are foreshortened to an almost exaggerated degree. Around the line of red trees, water, stone and sky merge together under the effects of fog. The angular presentation, based on interlocking trapezia, and the colour distortions caused by the numbing cold are counterbalanced by a sensitive, 'Debussyist' rendering of atmosphere. The dating of the composition wavers between 5 and 17 January 1890, at which time sketches of the quays of the Seine appear in Vuillard's Journal (see ill.) that



E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 41v.

seem to be fragments of the scene reconstructed in this small canvas. Once again, neo-Impressionist orthodoxy is circumvented by Vuillard's essentially poetic vision, being employed more as an instrument for punctuating space with colour than as a system for diffracting light.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Sérusier, *The Talisman*, 1888, oil on panel, 27 × 22 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



II-9

## II-9 Bouquet beside a Window

1889-90  
Oil on cardboard, 31 × 20 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Guillaume, Paris – James Vigevano Galleries, Los Angeles (California) – Private collection, 1954 – Sale, Christie's, New York, 1 May 1996, lot 176 (col. ill.) – Sale, Christie's, New York, 9 May 2000, lot 127 (col. ill.) – Private collection.

This is one of the earliest sketches to pave the way for the more radical work to come, such as *Schematized Portrait of Marie Vuillard* (II-4) or *The Banks of the Seine* (II-8). The bouquet of purple flowers receives only the barest of outlines against a curtain composed of furious strokes of grey and yellow paint. Vuillard's artistry resides in the way the elementary geometry of the painting is carried beyond the frame, the lines of tension continuing to reverberate in the space surrounding this rectangular composition.



II-10

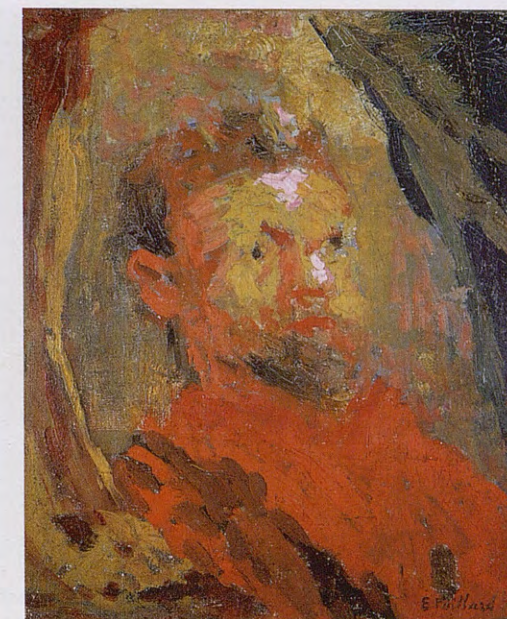
## II-10 Waroquy

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 30 × 22.7 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Bought from the artist by Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection.

The same Waroquy who appears with a cigarette in the double portrait (I-97) and seems to have been a very close friend of the young Vuillard and to some extent, a source of inspiration, looms here like a ghost. True, the pose is one traditionally employed by photographers, but the 'Expressionist' lighting effects – the presence of a green curtain and the bright red shadows – accentuated by the brutal flurry of brushstrokes, make this work an astonishing precursor to portraits made very much later by Soutine or Derain (the latter's 1905 *Portrait of Matisse*,<sup>1</sup> for example). We know very little about Waroquy, though his name appears frequently in Vuillard's Journal between 1888 and 1889. He did not attend the Lycée Condorcet with the painter.

<sup>1</sup> André Derain, *Portrait of Matisse*, 1905, oil on canvas, 50 × 40 cm, Musée Matisse, Nice.



II-11

## II-11 Male Head (Waroquy)

c. 1890  
Oil on canvas, 26.5 × 22 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – L'Œil Galerie d'Art, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 12 June 1963, lot 116 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 8 Dec. 1965, lot 55 (ill.), bought in – Beyeler, Basle (Switzerland) – Sale, Kunsthau Lempertz, Cologne, 19 May 1979, lot 743 (col. ill.) – Sale, Christie's, London, 31 March 1987, lot 60 (col. ill.) – Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** Basle, Beyeler, 1966, no. 47; and 1967-68, no. 96 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Clay 1975, p. 30 (col. ill.), mentioned as a *Self-Portrait*.

**Description:** *A study in reflections. The sitter's clothes are red and the green of the curtain is reflected in his face.* (JS)





II-12

## II-12 Alexandre Vuillard

c. 1890  
Pastel on grey paper, 27 × 21 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection – Alex Maguy, Paris, c. 1994 – Sale, Christie's South Kensington, London, 28 Nov. 1994, lot 22 (col. ill.) – Private collection – Galerie Berès, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Alex Maguy, 1964 – Stuttgart, Kunsthauß Bühler, 1996, p. 15 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *The painter's brother is sketched in profile, in a distinctly cartoon-like manner, in orange pastel.* (JS)



II-13

## II-13 Profile of a Man with a Goatee

c. 1891  
Pastel on paper, 26.3 × 18.4 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris, 2002.

**Exhibition:** St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 109, p. 147 (col. ill.).

Vuillard made a detailed preparatory sketch, previously unpublished, of this three-quarter profile, which may well be that of Pierre Bonnard (see ill.).



E. V., preparatory sketch for *Profile of a Man with a Goatee*, charcoal on paper, 36.6 × 29 cm.  
Private collection.

## II-14 Pierre Bonnard

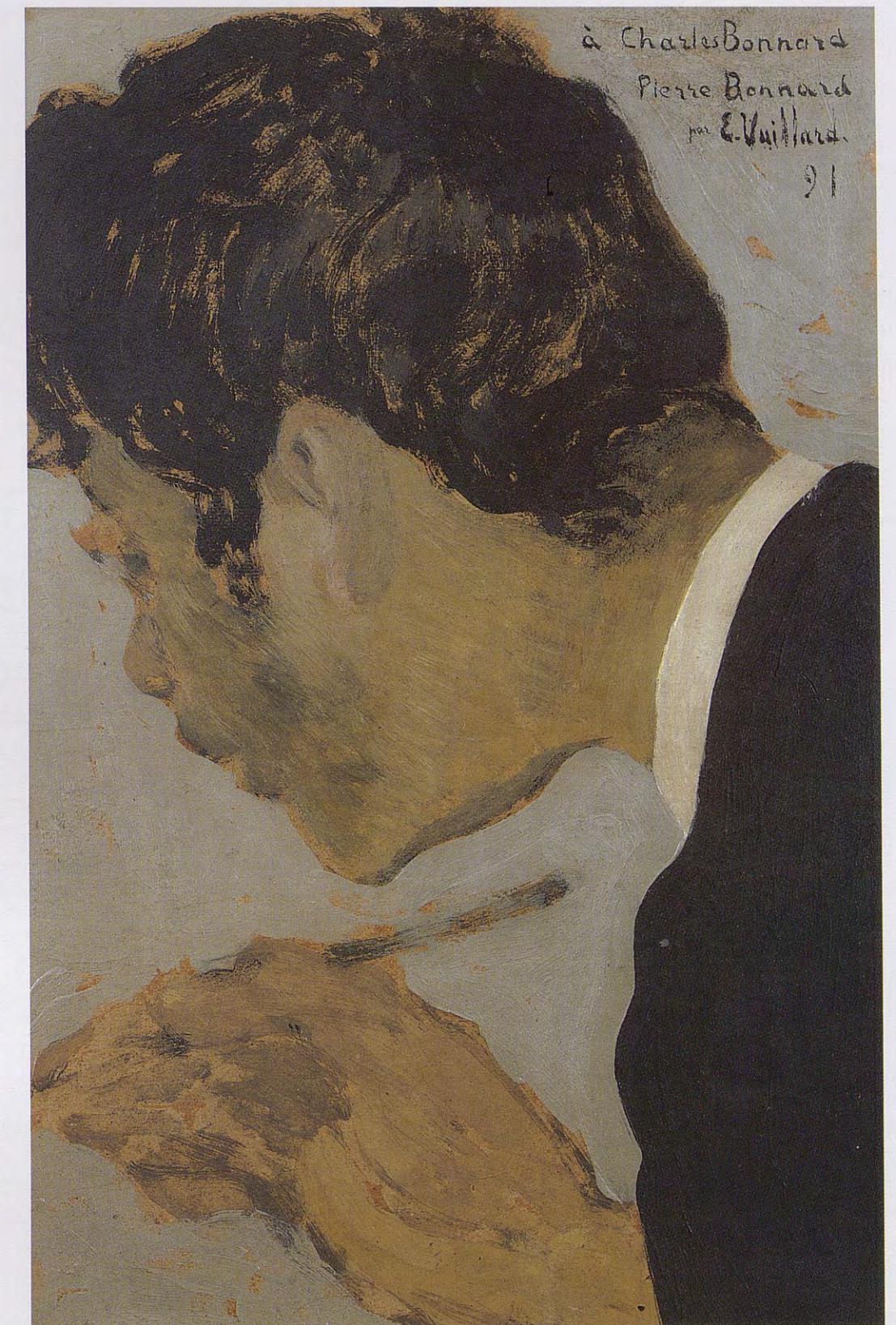
1891  
Oil on cardboard, 32.5 × 21.5 cm  
Signed, dated and dedicated, upper right:  
*à Charles Bonnard / Pierre Bonnard / par  
E. Vuillard. / 91*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Given by the artist to Charles Bonnard, Paris – Charles Terrasse, Paris – Private collection, Fontainebleau (France) – Private collection, 1992 – Tom James Co. / Oxxford Clothes.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Wildenstein, 1983, p. 88 – Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 98 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 29, p. 54 (ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, p. 50, no. 9 (ill.).

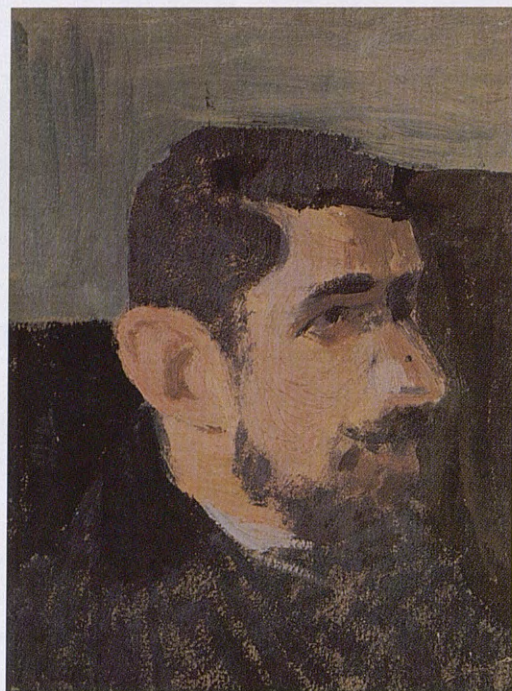
**Bibliography:** Schweicher 1949, p. 104 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 264-265, fig. 129 – Thomson 1988, pp. 28, 126, pl. 15 – Warnod 1988, p. 29 (col. ill.) – Bernier 1991, p. 155 (ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, p. 18 (col. ill.).

This portrait was painted in 1891, when the three friends, Vuillard, Bonnard and Lugné-Poe, were sharing a bachelor flat at 28 rue Pigalle belonging to Coulon, a senior member of the Conseil d'État, and is less complex than *At the 'Divan Japonais'* (III-5), where the singer is likewise viewed from an angle. Bonnard is shown in the act of painting, his brush hovering above the canvas. The painting may be considered a friendly tribute, though one cannot help noticing that the gaze Vuillard brings to bear is much less complex than in his self-portraits. The face, let us note, is once more turned away.



II-14





II-15

## II-15 Frédéric Henry

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas,  
24 × 18.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 April 1987, lot 105 (col. ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 11 May 2000, lot 138 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 23 Feb. 2001, lot 16 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 21 Feb. 2002, lot 11 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.



II-16

## II-16 The Top-Hat

c. 1888-93  
Oil on cardboard, 26 × 18.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York,  
The William S. Paley Collection,  
Acq. no. SPC 60.90

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – William S. Paley, United States – Paley bequest to The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1990.

**Exhibition:** New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1992, no. 83, pp. 140, 142 (col. ill.), 143.

**Description:** On an ochre floor at the foot of a yellow wall, a top-hat tossed into a corner next to a dark green overcoat with a few red stripes. (AC)



II-17

## II-17 Roussel with Black Forelocks

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard, 34 × 23 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1948 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** The bust of a man seated on an orange couch with a green curtain in the background. Some reworking with pastel and black crayon. The same figure as in The Reader [II-19]. (AC)



II-18

## II-18 Kerr-Xavier Roussel Perusing a Letter

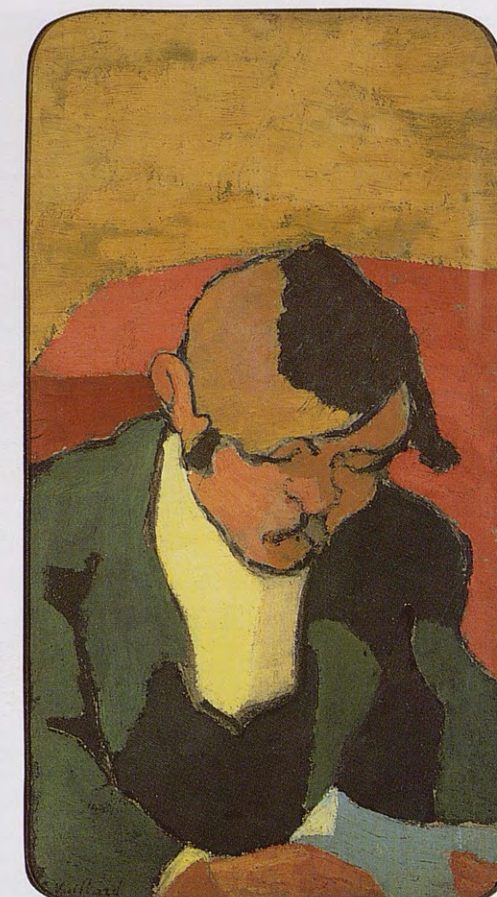
c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard, 32 × 19 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris.

**Description:** Roussel is seated on a sofa, the back of which is visible behind his lowered face. The wall is painted much the same shade of grey-green as the sitter's clothing, the strangely pronounced black shadows of which contrast with the white shirt-front. The face is heavily impastoed. (JS).

## II-19 The Reader

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard, 35 × 19 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1990-13



II-19

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Acquired as payment in kind by the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, in 1990.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 21 [*Étude d'après KX Roussel*, c. 1891-92] – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 14 (col. ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 12 (col. ill.) – Paris, Grand Palais, 1971, no. 108 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1973, no. 3 – London, Royal Academy, 1979-80, no. 230 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1980, no. 142 (ill.) – Paris, Orsay, 1990-91, p. 142 (ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 145 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Georges 1982, p. 64 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 221-222, fig. 96 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 15 (col. ill.).

As in *Octagonal Self-Portrait* (II-25), an area of shadow falls first across the reader's face and then the body, dividing the picture into sharply defined zones of colour. The separation between the ochre and the vermillion is particularly pronounced. Roussel is probably reading a letter. Vuillard's future brother-in-law is often associated with the virtues of introspection, in the form of being absorbed in a book. This may be taken as a sign of respect on Vuillard's part for Roussel's intellectual prestige. This small, heav-

ily compartmentalized and Synthetist work may be compared to Gauguin's *Portrait of Meijer De Haan* (see ill.), in which the sit-



Paul Gauguin,  
*Portrait of Meijer  
De Haan*, 1889,  
oil on panel.  
Museum of Modern  
Art, New York.

ter is likewise locked away in the thoughts conjured up by the books at the centre of the composition. It is perhaps this portrait of Roussel that Vuillard is referring to in his *Journal* for 2 September 1890: 'habits of mind, naturalist ideas are an obstacle; careful work the need for this in a work like the painting of Roussel.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. V., *Journal*, I, 1, fol. 56v.



## II-20

## Kerr-Xavier Roussel's Father

c. 1890

Oil on canvas, 37 × 27.5 cm

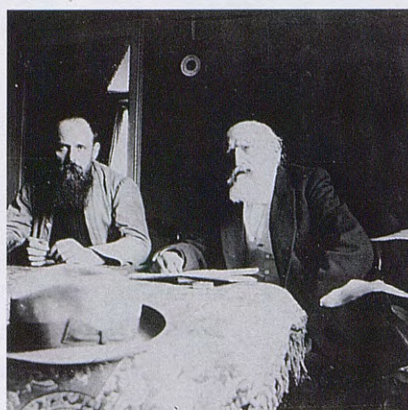
Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Georges Maratier, Paris – Georges Renand, Paris, 1945 – Sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris, 4 Dec. 1998, lot 22 (col. ill.) – Galerie Belier, Paris – Private collection, France.

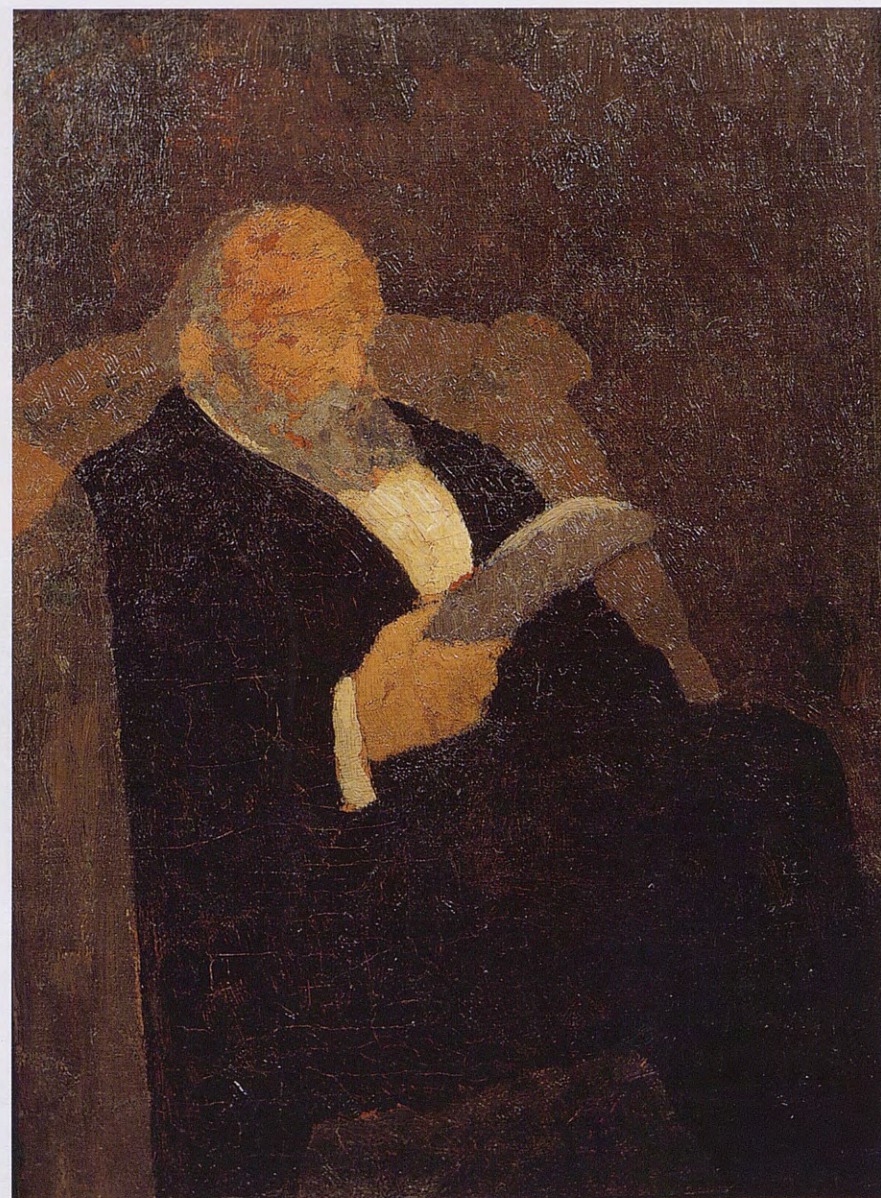
**Exhibition:** Paris, Orangerie, 1949-50, no. 263.

**Description:** Roussel's father is sitting in a brown armchair, reading. His black jacket is lit up by a creamy white shirt-front and cuffs. Greenish background. (JS)

Xavier Roussel was a physician, first in Lorry-les-Metz, then, after 1870, in Paris. He followed the career of his first son, Kerr-Xavier, with close attention. Admiring his talent, he would frequently turn a blind eye to his escapades. In this small portrait, Vuillard brings out the heavy bulk of the father, who is occupied in reading. His physical appearance is known to us from a series of snapshots Vuillard took of him at his home in Nanteuil in 1907, where he was to die two years later (see ill.). The style of the portrait – compartmentalised and Synthetist – is similar to that of *Schematized Portrait of Julien Magnin* (II-26), *Lilacs* (II-28) and *Nude in a Cave* (III-37).



E. V., Kerr-Xavier Roussel and his father, 1907, photograph. Private collection.



II-20

## II-21

## The Kiss

c. 1891

Oil on paper, mounted on cardboard, 23 × 16.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

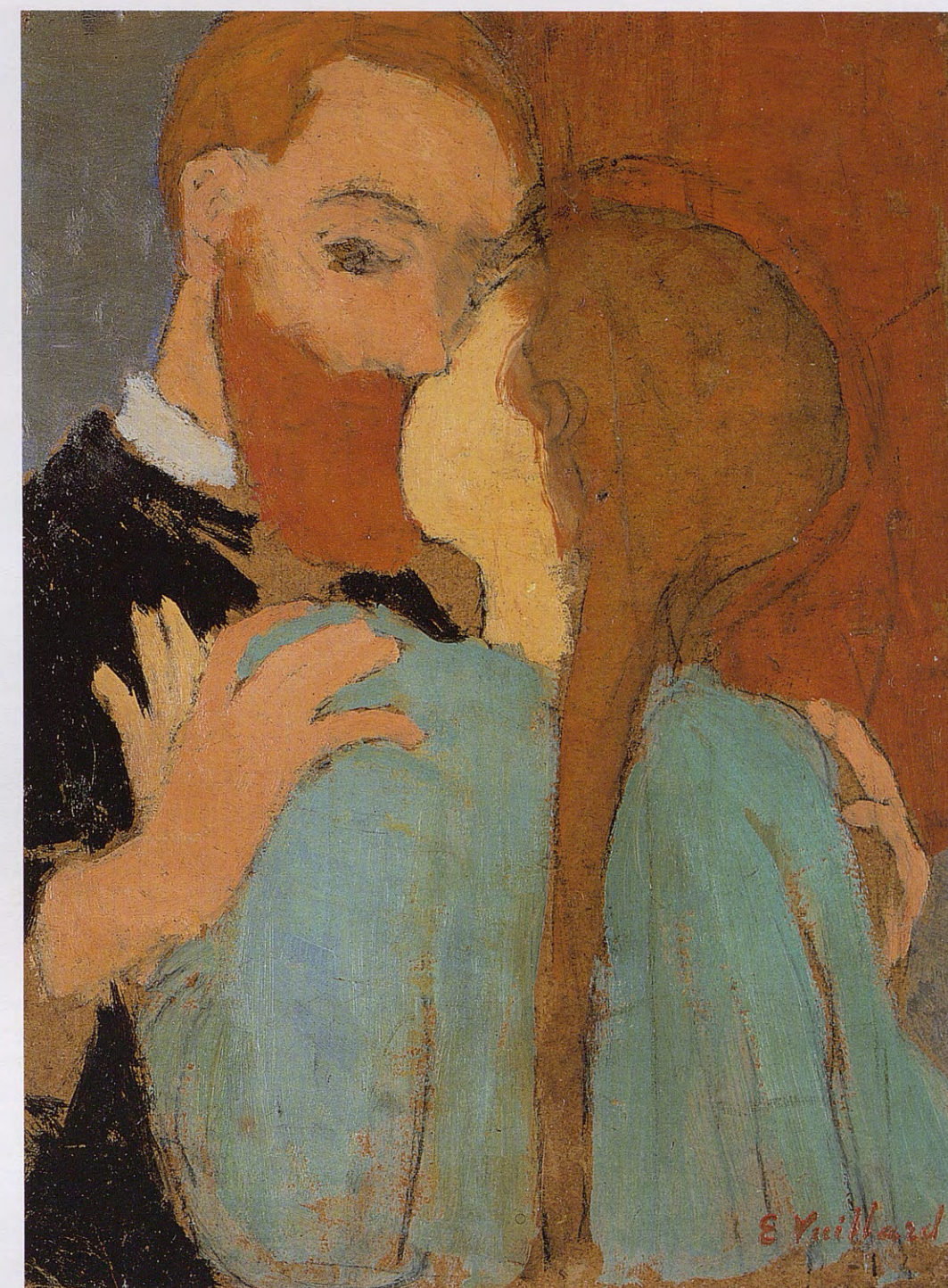
**Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), The Louis E. Stern Collection, 1963-181-76**

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris – Sam Salz, New York – Louis E. Stern, New York, 1955 – Gift from Stern to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, in 1963.

**Exhibitions:** Brooklyn, Brooklyn Museum, 1962-63, no. 103 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 5 (col. ill.).

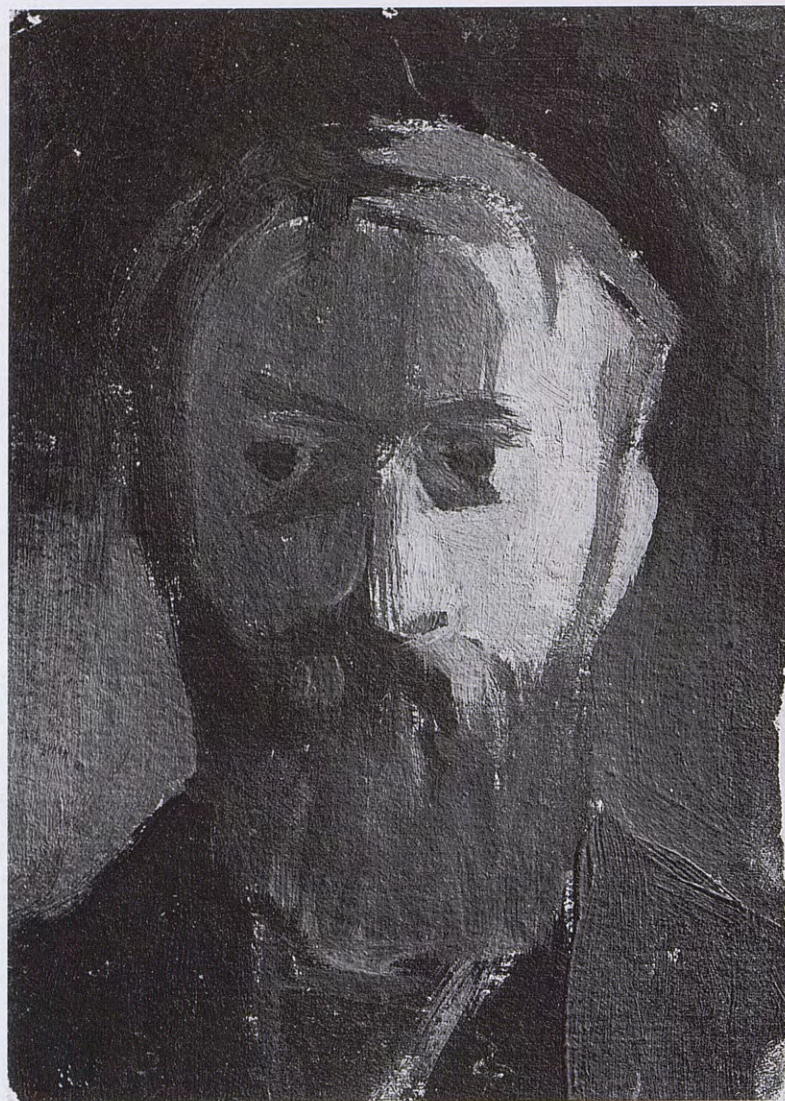
**Bibliography:** Philadelphia 1965, p. 69 – Barilli 1967c, p. 127 (col. ill.); and 1967e, p. 97 (ill.) – Negri 1970, p. 22, col. pl. 37 – Daniel 1984, pp. 381, 385, fig. 138 – Easton 1989, pp. 14-16 – Rishel, travelling exhib. cat., United States, 1989-91, p. 122, fig. 164 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 18 (ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, p. 10 (col. ill.) – Sidlauskas, 1997, pp. 95-97 – Cogeval 2002, p. 10.

Embraces are few and far between in Vuillard's work, though even here no lips are depicted and the embrace is that of a frail body clasped by tentacular hands. The work can probably be dated circa 1890-91, since the crown of Vuillard's head still has all its hair. His sensitive gaze seems to disappear into a mirror. The picture was long known as *The Brotherly Embrace*, for a puritan streak among Vuillard's commentators made it hard to imagine the painter embracing anyone other than his sister. In 1891, however, his sister was nearly thirty, was as tall as he and had thin hair permanently gathered up in a chignon; the picture, then, depicts a girl, in all likelihood one of those many self-effacing young apprentices employed in the maternal dressmaking studio as part of the hard-working, 'extended family' amongst which the painter grew up. These apprentices appear several times in his painting (see IV-9 *The Apprentices*, IV-55 *The Drawer*, V-17 *Young Girls Strolling*).



II-21





II-22

## II-22 Self-Portrait

c. 1890  
Oil on thin cardboard, 16 x 11 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris.

## II-23 Self-Portrait

c. 1890  
Oil on canvas, 41 x 33 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Mary and Leigh Block, Chicago (Illinois) – Block sale, Sotheby's, New York, 20 May 1981, lot 311 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 32 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 21 – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 57 – London, Wildenstein, June 1948, no. 3 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 3 – Basle, Kunsthalle,

1949, no. 33 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 163 – Rennes, April-May 1952, no. 7 – Paris, Charpentier, 1953-54, no. 192 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 13 – Washington D.C.-Los Angeles, 1967, no. 29 (ill.) – Boston, 1968, no. 30 (ill.) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 8 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946b, p. 67 (ill.) – Rewald 1952, fig. 2 – Chassé 1960, pl. 24 – Barilli 1967c, p. 154 (ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, pp. 21-22.

**Description:** *The face is divided decoratively into two zones, the hair, beard and light-coloured flesh being executed in flat tones. Black dots for the eyes and red holes for the ears. An exercise in Synthetism which, like the next two entries (II-24, II-25), must date from the period when Vuillard was working in the studio in Montparnasse lent him by his friend, Ranson, in the summer of 1890. (AC)*



II-23

## II-24 Self-Portrait

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard, 36 x 28.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Rosenberg, New York – Private collection, Los Angeles (California).

**Exhibitions:** New York, 1954, p. 101 (col. ill.) – Los Angeles-San Francisco-Cleveland, 1965, no. 23 (ill.) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 9 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 6 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Schweicher 1949, pp. 102-103 – Preston 1971, p. 72 (col. ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, pp. 21-22 – Georges 1982, p. 64 – Daniel 1984, p. 379, fig. 134 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 107-108, fig. 21 – Easton 1989, pp. 20-21.

**Description:** *The same separation of tonal values and the same pure colours as in the previous portrait, only this time against a green background. Lemon-yellow hair, pink forehead and nose, yellow and brown beard. (AC)*

This was something of a dress-rehearsal for *Octagonal Self-Portrait*, as the last minor adjustments are made before the explosion of pure Synthetist provocation. All the elements found in the following entry (II-25) are present, albeit in more summary form, against a background composed of violent, criss-cross strokes. And we can already see, bursting through the picture, that disturb-



Pierre Bonnard, *Portrait of Édouard Vuillard*, c. 1891, oil on cardboard. Private collection.



II-24

ing invention: a collage of lemon-yellow hair and orange beard. But is it something more than just invention? If we consider a meditative portrait Bonnard made as a tribute to Vuillard at the same moment (see ill.), the square panel at the bottom right-hand corner of which suggests that it was originally designed for a mantelpiece, we notice a marked difference in colour between Vuillard's beard – russet – and his hair – ash-blond. Even in his most inventive compositions, Vuillard always sets down a partially verifiable reality.



## II-25

## Octagonal Self-Portrait

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard, 36 × 28 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.

Exhibitions: Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 20 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 8 (ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 9 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1960-61, no. 734 – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-64, no. 308 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 8 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 13 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 11 (ill.) – Brussels, Musées Royaux, 1975, no. 25 (ill.) – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 9 (col. ill.) – London, Royal Academy, 1979-80, no. 229 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1980, no. 143 (ill.) – Tokyo-Osaka-Fujisawa, 1981, no. 88 (col. ill.) – Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Le Prieuré, 1982-83, no. 53 (col. ill.) – Paris, Grand Palais, 1983, no. 61 (col. ill.) – Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 99 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 7, p. 160 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 143 (col. ill.) – Florence, 1998, no. 8, p. 47 (col. ill.); and Montreal, 1998, no. 156, p. 24 (col. ill.).

Bibliography: Salomon 1945, p. 135 (ill.) – Chastel 1946, frontispiece – Dorival 1957, p. 21 – Salomon 1961, pp. 28-29 (col. ill.); and 1968, pp. 46-47 (col. ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, p. 22 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 111-112, fig. 66 – Mauner 1978, p. 210, fig. 56 – Georges 1982, p. 47 – Daniel 1984, pp. 377-379, fig. 133 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 106-109, fig. 22 – Thomson 1988, p. 32, col. pl. 20 – Warnod 1988, p. 23 (col. ill.) – Easton 1989, pp. 20-21, col. fig. 7 – Makarius 1989, p. 65 (col. ill.) – Forgione 1992, pp. 96, 116-117, fig. 51 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 23 (col. ill.) and cover ill. – Cogeval, exhib. cat. 1998, Florence, no. 8; and Montreal, no. 156.

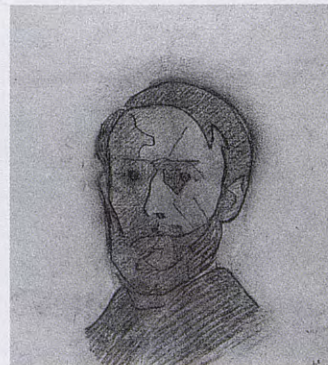
Description: Against an octagonal green background dotted with blue and red, the face is rendered in the cloisonnisme style of the time, using almost pure colours and remarkably strong contrasts: dark area to the left, light area to the right; orange beard, lemon-yellow hair, pink face, and red for the nostril and ear. The neck is yellow, the jacket blue. (JS)

The octagonal format reinforces the inward organization of the painting, which at first appears like a series of interlocking masses that might at any moment come apart. Seldom



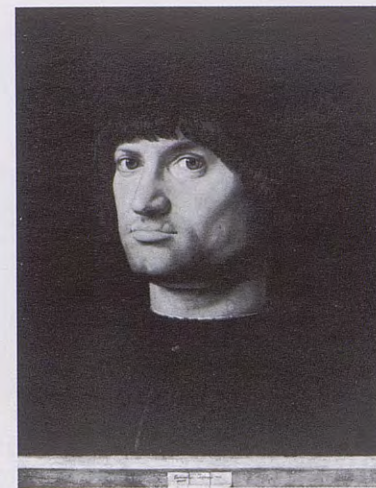
II-25

employed by Vuillard, it accentuates the sacred character of the composition, being the perfect conjunction of circle and square. It would



E. V., *Self-Portrait*, charcoal on paper, 31 x 26 cm. Private collection.

not have escaped a friend of Ranson and Sérusier that the octagon is the form traditionally employed for baptismal fonts ever since early Christian times, as the fusion of Empire – symbolised by the square – and the Church, enclosed within an infinite circle. The octagon, then, not only reinforces Vuillard's personality by setting it inside a circle, but also stands as a symbol for the rebirth of the soul. The tight framing of the artist's face calls to mind Italian Renaissance models that were familiar to Vuillard and sketches of which appear often in his youthful *Journal*. Turning a page, for example, we find Titian's *Man with a Glove*.<sup>1</sup> Under the entry for 31 August 1890,



Antonello da Messina, *Il Condottiere*, 1475, oil on panel. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Titian, *Portrait of a Man*, c. 1512, oil on canvas. National Gallery, London.

Vuillard notes: 'Dreamed of a gallery of *cloisonné* Italian paintings'.<sup>2</sup> Antonello da Messina's *Il Condottiere* (see ill.), which had been hanging in the galleries of the Louvre since 1865, or Titian's *Portrait of a Man* (see ill.) could equally have served as models for this bold composition, and, in any case, are a more likely source of influence than Japanese prints. Along with the frame, Vuillard also borrows from Italian models the neutral background, which abstracts the figure from any clear indication of space, and the harsh light, which thrusts the face into the foreground. The shower of dashes used to outline the head further accentuates, should any further emphasis be needed, the metonymic character of the sacred halo in which Vuillard's face is bathed. Neo-Impressionist in style, the halo acts as a discreet metaphor for a then fashionable aesthetic which he respected but eschewed.

The silent, half-turned torso not only reveals a growth in self-confidence when compared with the earlier portraits, but works in tandem with the provocatively full colours: the yellow hair, pink skin, orange beard and blue neck, like carefully calculated pieces in a hallucinogenic jigsaw puzzle, are a concession to the violent *cloisonnisme* of his fellow Nabis. As always, though, the boldness is tempered by the melancholy gaze of the eyes lost in shadow, the shadow that renders a map of doubt, breaking up the forehead and laying bare the inmost contradictions of the artist. Amongst comparable works from the same period, only Gauguin's *Self-Portrait with Yellow Christ*<sup>3</sup> and the *Self-Portrait*<sup>4</sup> painted by Van Gogh at Saint-Rémy achieve a similar intensity – religious and Syncretist in the one, expressionist and fraught with anxiety in the other. Let us acknowledge the fact: the absence of modelling and the radicalisation of the means employed are even more unpromising in the young Nabi's work than in that of his illustrious elders. All of Vuillard's commentators have remarked on the emblematic character of the ginger beard as a forerunner to the violence of Fauvist painting. Yet the whimsicality Vuillard makes use of here has no equivalent; it remains unique, an unrivalled phenomenon. Rather than paving the way for Fauvism, the young Nabi painter seems to be adrift on the swiftly moving currents of a species of unacknowledged Pop Art, and a comparison with Andy Warhol's *Orange Marilyn* (see ill.), for example, would almost be more enlightening than with the usual Vlamincks or Derains. 'The



Andy Warhol, *Orange Marilyn*, 1964, synthetic polymer and serigraph on canvas. Private collection.

lines of a shaded figure, and the lines of the same figure not yet shaded appear unequal in size; the habit acquired at the outset of a ghastly education of helping along each charcoal line and giving an appearance of shading of a thing seen in the round is a great hindrance to *seeing* the form simply the outline; shading is a degradation in pictorial art and the artist should see [it] only as a degradation, not a thing in the round, the expression of the drawing and of the gradations of colour, not the actual nature of the real object.<sup>5</sup>

As in the great models from the Renaissance, this self-portrait does more than just reveal a physiognomy: it brings out an order of values without which that physiognomy would have no reason to exist. Vuillard was perfectly aware that a portrait is above all an abstract construction, the personification of a pre-existing norm.

From one month to the next, the painter scrutinized the irremediable changes that came over his face. It is tempting to link this mortifying reflex with the famous novel by Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, published in the same year, 1890. The passage in Chapter 8 in which the decadent young dandy first notices that his effigy is starting to decay would make a fascinating epigraph to the self-portrait in question: 'That such a change should have taken place was incredible to him. And yet it was a fact. Was there some subtle affinity between the chemical atoms, that shaped themselves into form and colour on the canvas, and the soul that was within him? Could it be that what that soul thought, they realized? That what it dreamed, they made true? Or was there some other, more terrible, reason? He shuddered, and felt afraid, and, going back to the couch, lay there, gazing at the picture in sickened horror'.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tiziano Vecellio, called Titian, *Portrait of an Unknown Man or Man with a Glove*, c. 1510, oil on canvas, 100 × 87 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

<sup>2</sup> E. V., *Journal*, I.1, fol. 71r.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Gauguin, *Self-Portrait with Yellow Christ*, 1889, oil on canvas, 36 × 46 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

<sup>4</sup> Vincent Van Gogh, *Self-Portrait*, 1889, oil on canvas, 65 × 54.5 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

<sup>5</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 26 Nov. 1890, I.2, fol. 25v.

<sup>6</sup> Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, London, Penguin Books, 2000.





II-26

## II-26 Schematized Portrait of Julien Magnin

c. 1890  
Oil on canvas, 39.5 x 31 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.

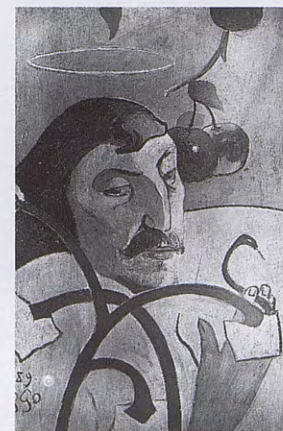
Description: Executed in flat tones – the hair is orange, the face grey-green, the immediate background a bright yellow surrounded by a dark green and

brown mass – this portrait marks an advance on previous attempts inspired by the 'theories' of the Sérusier circle. (JS)

Several months had passed since the previous portrait of Magnin (I-91), and Vuillard now painted a picture of his friend no less bold than his own *Octagonal Self-Portrait* (II-25). The abruptness with which the figure emerges as if by magic into the picture-plane is arguably even more pronounced in this hitherto little-known work. His face shines through the banks of green and wine-coloured clouds that have gathered, like a

dark mandorla, around the light-filled gap. Recognisable by his red hair and slender, bright-orange moustache, Julien Magnin has been fitted out with two horns emerging from his brow. The features of the face, predominantly grey-green, are underlined with purple, while the lips are red; only the pupils of the eyes show a hint of black. In short, portrayed against a bright yellow background, the painter's young friend has been invested – tongue-in-cheek – with the attributes of the devil. Perhaps, in the group formed by Pierre Hermant, Frédéric Henry, Kerr-Xavier Roussel and Vuillard, it was he who spurred his friends on to their nocturnal escapades? In his *Journal* for 21 November 1888, Vuillard notes: 'hangover',<sup>1</sup> and in the margin draws a figure (probably a self-portrait) propping himself up with difficulty against a wall. Entries of a nocturnal nature are frequent throughout the first notebook of Vuillard's *Journal*, as are allusions to Magnin. With this bundle of clues to help us, we can piece together the role played by this mysterious figure, the only one of Vuillard's friends not to form part of his artistic circle. A well-dressed bank clerk by day, and highly regarded by Vuillard's mother (see IV-87), Magnin may have been the one who, the moment night fell, led his friends off to drink absinthe in working-men's cafés (*estaminets*) or visit opium dens, perhaps even inciting them to vice in brothels; the choice was vast in a city like Paris at the turn of the nineteenth century. Hence his portrait as a tempter, worthy of Ranson of the same period.

Vuillard has painted what Françoise Cachin, speaking of Gauguin's *Self-Portrait* (see ill.),



Paul Gauguin,  
*Self-Portrait*, 1889,  
oil on canvas.  
National Gallery of Art,  
Washington D.C.



Maurice Denis,  
*Offering at Calvary*,  
c. 1890, oil on canvas.  
Private collection.

calls an 'iconoclastic icon';<sup>2</sup> a sense of the sacred and a sense of humour are delightfully combined in this mysterious composition, which is more an *offering* than a portrait. He involves his friend in a Symbolist-style lay-out, the shimmering flat tints of which recall Maurice Denis' *Orange Christ*<sup>3</sup> and *Offering at Calvary* (see ill.), compositions exactly contemporary, as experimental as they were sacred and similarly festooned with flat tints.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., *Journal*, I.1, fol. 10r.

<sup>2</sup> Fr. Cachin, *Gauguin*, Paris, Grand Palais, 1989, no. 92, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Denis, *Orange Christ*, c. 1890, oil on cardboard, 24 x 19 cm, priv. coll.

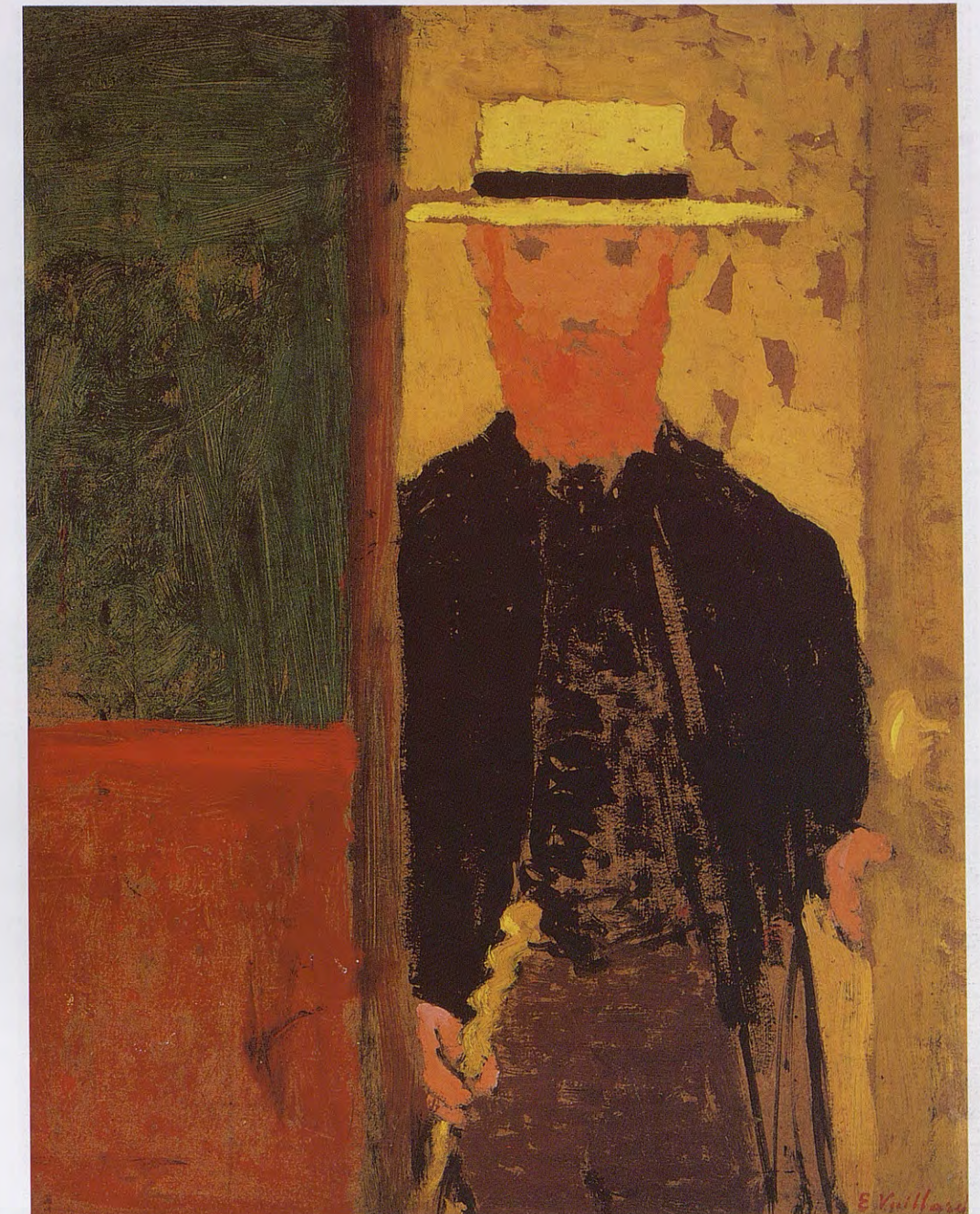
## II-27 Self-Portrait with Walking- Stick and Boater

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard mounted on canvas,  
36 x 28.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

Provenance: Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Ralph F. Colin, New York, 1953 – E. V. Thaw, New York – William Kelly Simpson, New York, 1992.

Exhibitions: Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 40 (ill.), 101 – New York, Knoedler, 1960, no. 11 (ill.) – Chicago, 1972, no. 7 (ill.) – Sydney-Melbourne-New York, 1975, no. 111 (ill.).

Bibliography: *Vogue* 131, Jan. 1958, p. 99 (col. ill.) – *The Burlington Magazine* 52, May 1960, p. 227, fig. 50 – Preston 1971, p. 24, fig. 25 – Georges 1982, p. 43 – Daniel 1984, fig. 139 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 111-113, 385, fig. 25 – Makarius 1989 (back cover ill.) – Groom 1993, p. 8, col. fig. 8.



II-27

Description: The painter is seen head-on, wearing a light-coloured straw hat, black coat and purple trousers, standing in a doorway against a yellow background. The features of the pink face are given rudimentary expression by the unpainted cardboard ground. The wall is green at the top and red below. (AC)

This is the Nabi painter's '*Bonjour Monsieur Vuillard*'. In the foreground, two areas of almost Pompeian flat colours suggest a corridor in a block of flats, no doubt that of the painter's home in the rue de Miromesnil. The speckled area behind the artist represents, in stylized form, the wallpaper found in a flat. Vuillard, who is holding a carefully twisted walking-stick and sporting

a boater, is about to go out. Compared with the hermeticism of his previous self-portraits, the composition clearly reveals a renewed self-confidence. Vuillard tackles the world head-on as he steps outside. The vibrato effects of the brushstrokes, along with the artist's dress, suggest that the scene may have been painted in summer 1891. For the first time perhaps, Monsieur Vuillard has no misgivings about going out into the world, driven by a 'determination to venture forth and explore new artistic and personal horizons'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ciaffa 1985, pp. 112-113.





II-28

## II-28

## Lilacs

c. 1890

Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 35.6 x 27.9 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio [*Le Bouquet schématique*] – Sam Salz, New York – Donald and Jean Stralem Collection, New York, 1953 – Stralem sale, Sotheby's, New York, 8 May 1995, lot 42 (col. ill.) – William Kelly Simpson, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 21 (col. ill.), 101 – Minneapolis, Institute of Arts,

1962, p. 149 (col. ill.) – New York, Christie's, 1968, no. 32 (ill.) – New York, Knoedler, 1970, no. 63 (ill.) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. IV (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona, 1990-91, no. 8, p. 169 (col. ill.) – Montreal, 1998, no. 158, p. 26 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Dorival 1957, p. 21 – Preston 1971, pp. 70-71 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 24 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 26 (col. ill.).

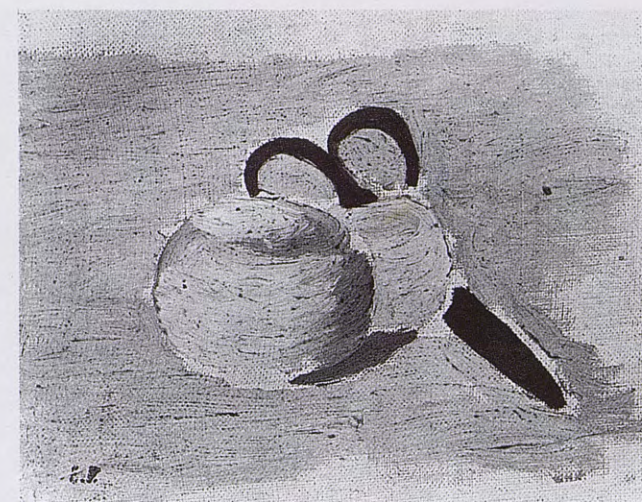
**Description:** Clusters of pink and green lilac and foliage in a green vase cast a pure blue shadow across the yellow table. Ochre background. Fauvist avant la lettre, the painting shows the influence of Gauguin as handed down by Sérusier. (JS)

This 'schematized bouquet' represents the death-throes of the precepts taught in the

academies, whereby objects had to be seen 'in the round' by means of colour gradation. *The lilacs* may be said to be Vuillard's 'Talisman'. More than any other painting of his from this period, they illustrate the profession of pre-Nabi faith which he had set down in his Journal for 20 November 1888: 'We perceive nature through the senses which give us images of forms and colours, sounds, etc. a form a colour only exists in relation to another. Form alone does not exist. We only conceive of relations. Painting is the reproduction of nature seen in its forms and colours consequently of the relations between forms and colours. This is why I relate my eye which has just grasped a relation of form or colour to the paper or canvas I must reproduce that same relation – I end up in front of any body whatever if I focus any point whatever'.<sup>1</sup>

A purple shadow settles on the sloping yellow surface, while the mauve and soft green harmonies of the bouquet stand out against the subtly muted orange ground. The brutal juxtaposition of areas of light and areas of shadow, along with the sharply defined silhouettes of the flowers against a uniform, abstract background, show that Vuillard excels in the Synthetist style which he was shortly to abandon, as though he were visiting each floor of the palace of avant-garde art in turn, thereby avoiding the 'pedantry' with which he reproached Gauguin. The young Nabi painter does not limit himself to clever bravura displays like his fellow artist, Émile Bernard; he articulates clearly separated areas of flat colour whose lyrical unity is Fauvist *avant la lettre*, but which above all stand as the acme of Synthetism. In short, he invents and then perfects a system that he will subsequently quite happily do without.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 12r.



II-29

## II-29

## Two Balls of Wool and a Pair of Scissors (study)

c. 1890 ?

Oil on canvas, 11.5 x 15 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Art market, Los Angeles (California)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jean-Pierre Selz, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 31 March 1977, lot 289 (ill.) – Paul Kantor Gallery, Beverly Hills.

## II-30

## Woman in a Green Hat

c. 1890

Oil on cardboard, 20.5 x 16.2 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman (Oklahoma), 2000.013.030

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Bela Hein, Paris – Georges Renand, Paris, 1951 – Jean-Pierre Selz, Paris, 1964 – David Findlay, New York – Aaron and Clara M. Weitzenhoffer, Oklahoma City, 1979 – Weitzenhoffer bequest to the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman, 2000.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 83 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 297-298, fig. 159.

**Description:** A young lady with brown hair, black eyes and a matt complexion, wearing a black blouse and a broad-brimmed hat generously chequered with green. Behind her is a bright yellow picture-frame. (AC)

## II-31

## Lady with a Pearl Earring

c. 1890

Oil on canvas, 20.5 x 17 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 2 June 1943, lot 87, bought in – Maurice Laffaille, Paris – Marcel Michaud, Lyons (France) – Jacques Lindon, Paris – Knoedler, New York – Allwa Handelgesellschaft, United States, 1970 – Fischer Fine Art, London, c. 1972 – Galerie La Boétie, New York, c. 1978 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Carré, 1942, no. 3 [*Femme au chapeau noir*, c. 1888] – London, Fischer Fine Art, June-July 1972, no. 89 (ill.).



II-30

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 44 – Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 83 – Fels 1950, p. 137 (ill.) – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 297-298, fig. 158.

**Description:** A young lady in a grey blouse wearing a black hat decorated with a garnet-red ribbon. The face seems to be executed in [raw or burned?] umber over vermillion underpainting. Her brilliant black eye is further heightened by a shiny white pearl earring. The background is in flat tones reminiscent of a pantomime-set: pink earth, blue fence, yellow sky and a pink tree in the top left-hand corner. (AC)

The young lady, no doubt the same model as in the previous entry, crosses the frame of the painting in the same manner as Bonnard's *The Passer-by*.<sup>1</sup> The face is closely framed by the window, suggesting a moving body. The portrait seems more traditional if we leave out the particularly dynamic hat, 'whose parabolic shape serves as an extension of the body'.<sup>2</sup> In his description of this picture, André Chastel speaks of its 'pantomime-set' colouring.

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Bonnard, *The Passer-by*, 1890, oil on wood, 36 x 25 cm, priv. coll.

<sup>2</sup> Ciaffa 1985, pp. 297-298.



II-31





II-32

## II-32 View from a Window

c. 1889-90  
Oil on paper, applied to cardboard,  
14.6 × 13.8 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jean-Pierre Selz, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 17 March 1970, lot 48 (ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 3 July 1975, lot 313 (ill.) – Dr Anton C. R. Dreesmann, Amsterdam – Sale, Christie's, London, 9 April 2002, lot 88 (col. ill.) – Galerie Bellier, Paris.

## II-33 Garden Seen through a Window

c. 1889-90  
Oil on cardboard, 35 × 28 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, Canada



II-33

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Private collection, Canada, 1957.

**Exhibition:** London, Tooth & Sons, 1956, no. 14 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Hubbard 1962, p. 159.

**Description:** *A tree-trunk and some pink and green leaves seen through a window. Broad, divided brushwork.* (AC)

## II-34 Foliage

c. 1889-90  
Oil on cardboard, 14.5 × 11.5 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Charles S. Payson, Manhasset, Long Island (New York), 1963 – Payson Family Collection, New York.

**Exhibition:** London, Tooth & Sons, April-May 1963, no. 14 (ill.).

**Description:** *Variiegated foliage ranging from orange to deep green. To the right is the wall of a house with open, grey-blue shutters.* (AC)



II-34



II-35

## II-35 Foliage Seen through a Window

c. 1889-90  
Oil on cardboard, 26 × 8 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *The foliage is rendered with oblique strokes. The window-frame is yellow.* (AC)



II-36

## II-36 The Petunia

c. 1889-90  
Oil on cardboard, 27.5 × 16.5 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – François Reichenbach, Paris – Private collection, United States.

**Description:** *A reddish brown window-bar separating a composition of flowers, greenery and leaves into two parts. In the upper part, some pink highlights on the left and a sort of ochre disk at the centre; in the lower part, the pink and white splash of a petunia. The unprimed cardboard support is visible throughout.* (AC)



II-37

## II-37 Foliage Seen through a Window

c. 1889-90  
Oil on cardboard, 26 × 10 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.





II-38

## II-38 The Cat

c. 1889-90  
Oil on cardboard, 27 × 16 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hector Brame, Paris – Otto Wertheimer, Paris – Marlborough Fine Art, London – Sir Robert Abdy, London, c. 1955 – Current whereabouts unknown.

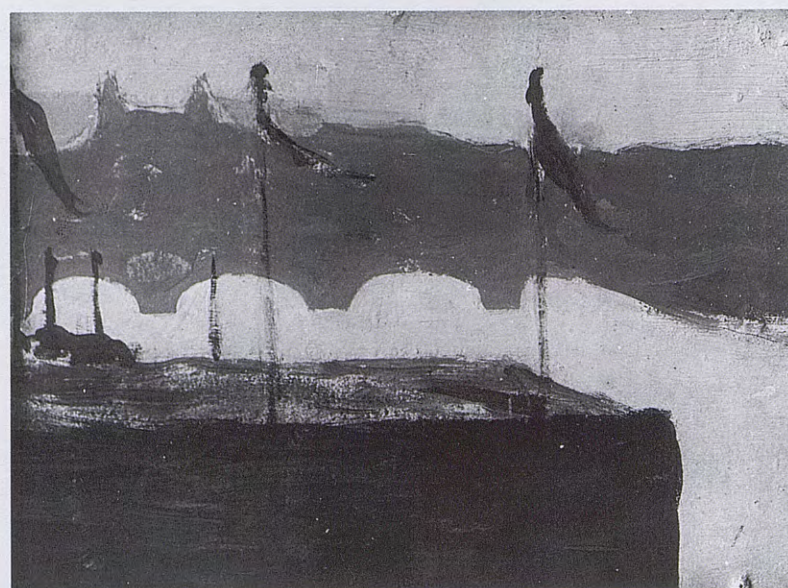
**Exhibition:** London, Marlborough, 1950, no. 11.

**Description:** *The cat's glossy black and yellow fur is somewhat similar to the green and brown wall-paper in the background. Black skirting-board. (AC)*

Vuillard is anything but an animal-painter, and the intrusion of domestic pets in his painting, which occurs frequently after 1900 – we all know Charley and Basto, Lucy Hessel's two dogs – always has a redundant feel to it. This affectionate sketch of a cat gazing out of a window is a rarity; the cat's Symbolist cousins can be found in *Women in the Garden* (III-31) and in the detached *Desmarais Screen* (V-32). The present composition can no doubt be put down to the influence of his friend Bonnard, a great cat-lover.



II-39



II-40

## II-39 Square Louis XVI

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 26.5 × 36 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 30 April 1962, lot 67 – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 23 May 1964, lot 74 (ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 6 April 1966, lot 3 (ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 102.

**Description:** *The building is blue-grey, the sky yellow, the foliage and meadow green. Three silhouettes to either side of a large tree. (JS)*

## II-40 Bridge and Landing-Stage

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard, 16 × 22 cm  
Signed, lower right (?)  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Ernest Coquelin Cadet, Paris – Coquelin Cadet sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 26 May 1909, lot 17 [*Le Pont et le Ponton*] – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no.17409) – Henry Bernstein, Paris, 31 August 1909 – Current whereabouts unknown.

## II-41 The Pink Street

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 20.1 × 20.4 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Private collection, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection, London.

**Exhibition:** London, JPL, 1988, no. 10 (col. ill.).

## II-42 Man in Profile, Seated on a Bench

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 13.9 × 48.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** Salzburg, Salis, 1985, no. 16 (col. ill.).



II-41



II-42



## II-43

## The Scythe or The Rake

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 31.7 × 16.4 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.

## II-44

## The Pink Bench

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 17 × 23 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection – Wildenstein, New York, c. 1949 – Mr and Mrs Alex M. Lewyt, New York – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Parvillée, 1943, no. 72 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 30 [*Le Parc*] – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101, p. 31 (ill.), [*The Wood*, c. 1892].

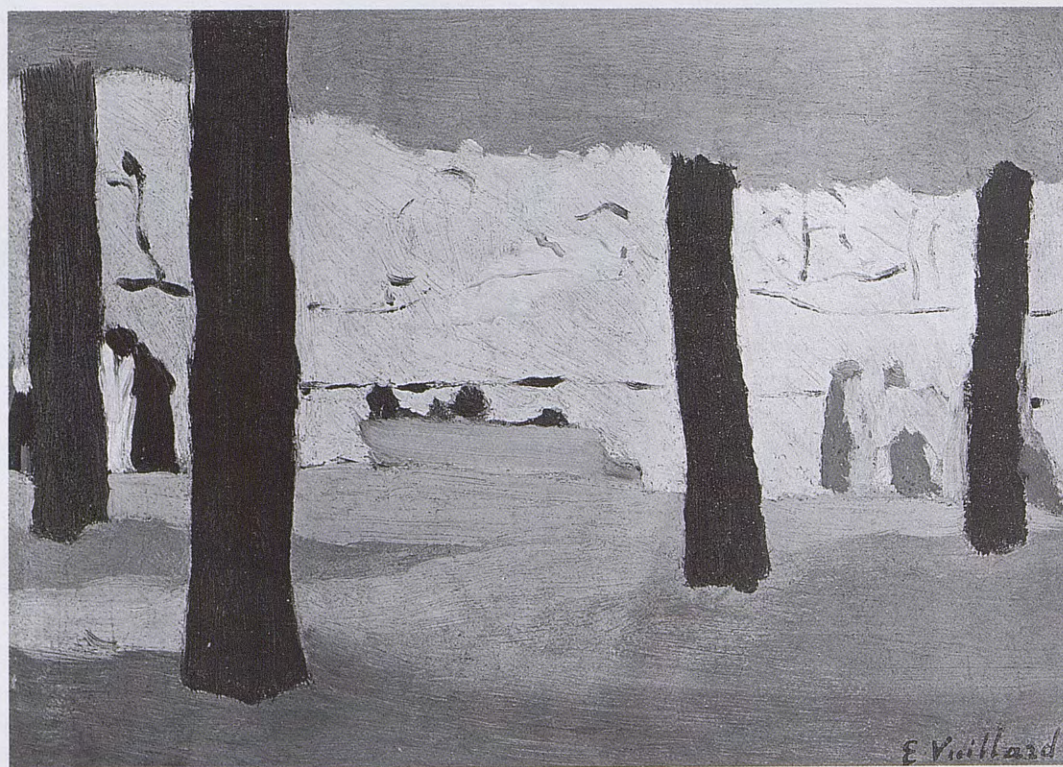
**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 44, p. 9 (ill.) – Ritchie 1954, p. 12.

**Description:** *Four tree-trunks rise like columns between green grass and green foliage. Luminous yellow background, in which vermilion, pink and black figures appear. A pink bench in the middle.* (AC)

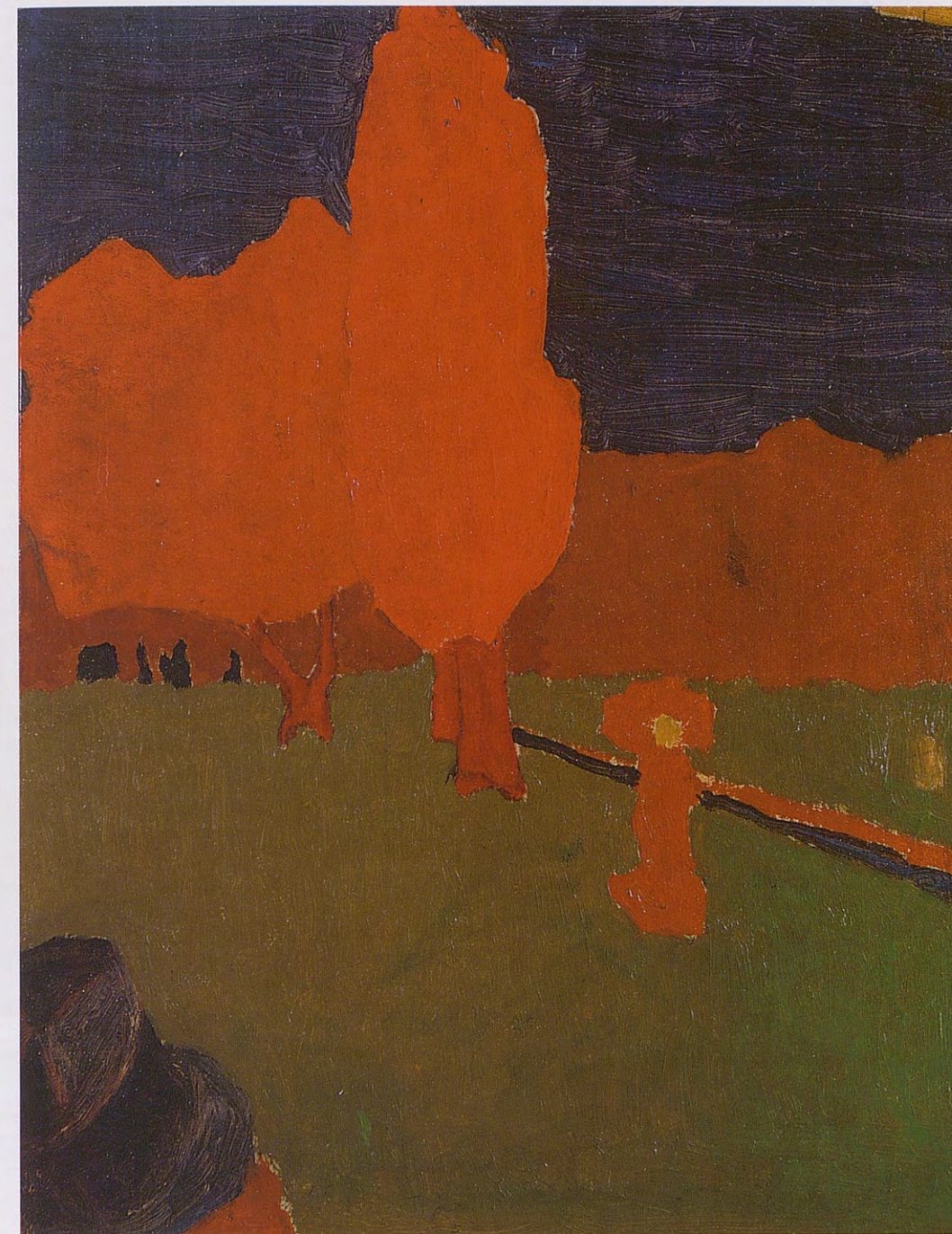
This is the perfect example of a sketch executed with virtuoso *far presto*. A few well-chosen brushstrokes are all that are needed to set the scene for this pocket-sized *Public Gardens*. The figures stand out against a yellow background, and the trunks are like pillars supporting a ceiling of trees. Certain Macchiaioli, the Florentine equivalents of the Impressionists, and Giovanni Fattori in particular, had already noted fugitive impressions of this kind on small wooden panels some thirty years earlier.



II-43



II-44



II-45

## II-45

## The Bois de Boulogne

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 30 × 23 cm  
Signed, upper right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Félix Fénéon, Paris – Fénéon sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 4 Dec. 1941, lot 86 – Georges Maratier, Paris – Raymond Creuze, Paris, c. 1949 – Sale, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 6 June 1956, lot 104 – Jean Davray, Paris – Knoedler,

Paris, c. 1961 – L'Œil Galerie d'Art, Paris – E. V. Thaw, New York – Richard Rodgers, New York, until 1980 – Galerie Daniel Malingue, Paris – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Lyons, 1929, no. 104b – Paris, Brû, 1930, no. 51 – Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 49 [*Le Bois de Boulogne*] – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 31 – Paris, Orangerie, 1949-50, no. 262 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1951, no. 19 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 182 [*Le Bois de Boulogne* or *Femmes dans la prairie*] – Paris, Malingue, 1980, no. 6 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** *BVA*, no. 9, 1 May 1923, p. 185 (ill.) – Dorival 1957, p. 21 – Mauner 1978, p. 220, fig. 68 – Cogeval 2002, p. 26 (col. ill.).

This is one of the peaks of perfection of Vuillard's Synthetist manner of the 1890s, in which we see the complementary influences of Sérusier, with his calculated Pont-Aven-style *gaucherie*, and Ranson, who favoured a more hermetic style of painting. One cannot help noting, however, that it represents one of the most curious – indeed, disturbing – productions of his Nabi period. The thematic ambiguity is reflected, moreover, in the work's frequent changes of title: *The Bois de Boulogne* at the Fénéon sale, *Woman Running in a Field* in 1951 and *Bois de Boulogne* in 1955. Like the eponymous heroine of Jensen's celebrated tale *Gradiva*, a lady slips silently by, a red splash on the green path, observed by a man in a top-hat in the bottom left-hand corner of the picture. The contrast between the dark blue sky and the orange-red tree turns what appears to be a nocturnal scene (but what is a lady doing at night with a parasol?) into



E. V., preparatory sketch for *The Bois de Boulogne*, charcoal on paper, 22 x 17.5 cm. Private collection.

a disturbing foreshadowing of some Surrealist film-still. It might also be compared with a small contemporary painting by Maurice Denis, *Noli Me Tangere* (see ill.), to which it bears an unsettling resemblance. On the banks of a similarly blue stream, the 'painter of fine icons' places Mary Magdalene opposite Christ in a décor that likewise conjures up waiting and uncertainty. Nevertheless, though in terms of Synthetism and spatial lay-out the two works are relatively similar, the theme of Vuillard's work distils an atmosphere of gnawing anxiety that is much closer to a Georges de Feure painting from the same period, *The Follower*





Maurice Denis, *Noli Me Tangere*,  
c. 1890, oil on cardboard  
mounted on cradled panel.  
Private collection.

at *Twilight* (see ill.), in which a fashionably dressed woman, lost in the woods, is trying to escape from the silhouette of her vampire-like aggressor. This unsettling atmosphere of



Georges de Feure, *The Follower at Twilight*,  
c. 1895, watercolour and gouache on paper.  
Private collection.

pent-up violence tinged with voyeurism brings Vuillard closer to the late nineteenth-century murder mystery, in particular the works of Gaston Le Roux, and to the kind of stories printed in the gutter press, which thrived on murders of single women. In Vuillard's work, she later turns up in the little-known *The Pursuit* (II-122) and is also portrayed in a far more explicit manner in the frontispieces he made in 1894 for Maurice Beaubourg's plays *L'Image* and *La Vie Muette*. The sensationalist side is, as one would expect with Vuillard, merged with a more compact, abstract form. A preparatory drawing from a hitherto unpublished sketchbook dating from 1889-90 shows how Vuillard first set the scene in a naturalistic manner (traditional perspective, gradations of space), portraying in greater detail the female figure here shown carrying a parasol

– a detail which the nocturnal atmosphere of the composition would seem to contradict; then, in the course of painting her, added the voyeur and 'synthetized' the space, thereby creating a sort of 'day for night' long before the term existed.

## II-46 The Tipcart

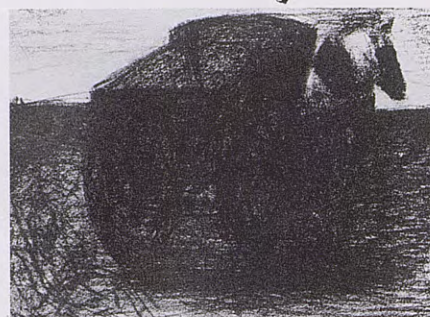
c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 17.1 × 26.1 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Art market, Salzburg (Austria)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Galerie Salis, Salzburg.

**Exhibition:** JPL, London, 1987-88, no. 52 (col. ill.).

This is one of Vuillard's most 'modern' sketches. The cart looks as though it has been etched into the yellow background. Are we looking at haystacks, or, as is more likely, mounds of sand on the quays of the Seine, as in *The Stevedores*, only this time seen from above? Though highly stylised, the cart looks more like one of the tipcarts

used to unload merchandise from barges along the banks of the Seine, than a hay-wagon used at harvest time. Seurat made a number of terse charcoal drawings representing this mode of transportation (see ill.). Vuillard's *Journal* for 1890 contains many sketches of tipcarts and of the banks of the Seine (see II-7).



Georges Seurat, *Horse with a Tipcart*, c. 1883,  
Conté crayon on paper. Musée du Louvre,  
Département des Arts Graphiques, Paris.



II-46

## II-47 Horse Grazing

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 19.5 × 16 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hammer, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 31 March 1982, lot 169 (col. ill.), bought in – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

This is another of Vuillard's enigmatic pictures. A reddish-brown horse is shown on a stretch of grass, with what looks like a river and the beginnings of a yellow bridge in the background. The horse is seen from a slightly raised vantage-point and not – as in *The Goose*, for example III-46 – from below. It has the force of a Surrealist apparition.



II-47

## II-48 Haystacks

c. 1890  
Oil on canvas, 10.5 × 34 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection, 1991.

**Exhibitions:** Tokyo, Wildenstein, 1974, no. 15 (ill.) – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 6 (col. ill.) – Paris, La Cave, 1980, no. 34 – London, JPL, 1985, no. 2 – Melbourne-Sydney, 1985, no. 38 (col. ill.) – New York, Bruton, 1986, p. 14 (col. ill.) –

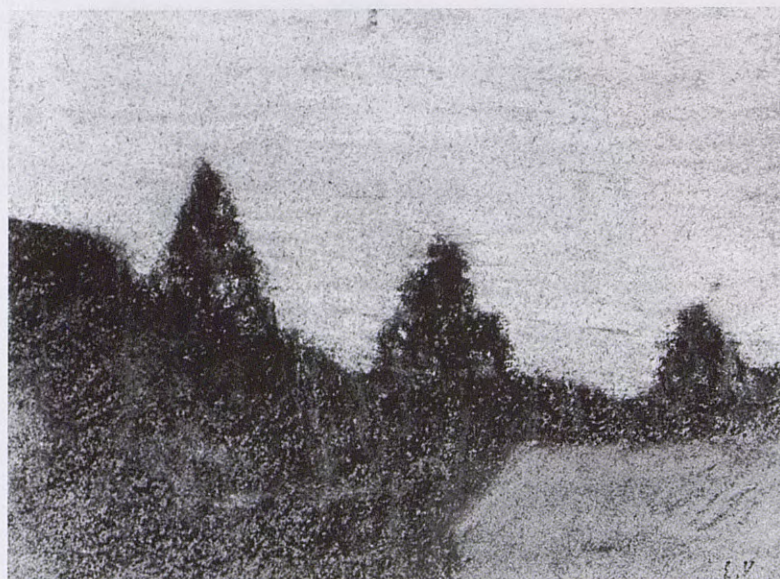
Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 2 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 2 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A rather sketchy Synthetist composition with a pink and yellow sky. (AC)



II-48





II-49

## II-49 Three Large Trees

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 12 × 15.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.

**Exhibition:** Melbourne, Tolarno Galleries, 1981, no. 8 (ill.).

## II-50 The Cloud

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 12 × 16 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Art market, Munich (Germany)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Kunsthandel Sabine Helms, Munich.



II-50

## II-51 Hilltop

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 13 × 17 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Art market, Melbourne (Australia)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne.

**Exhibition:** Melbourne, Tolarno Galleries, 1981, no. 9 (ill.).



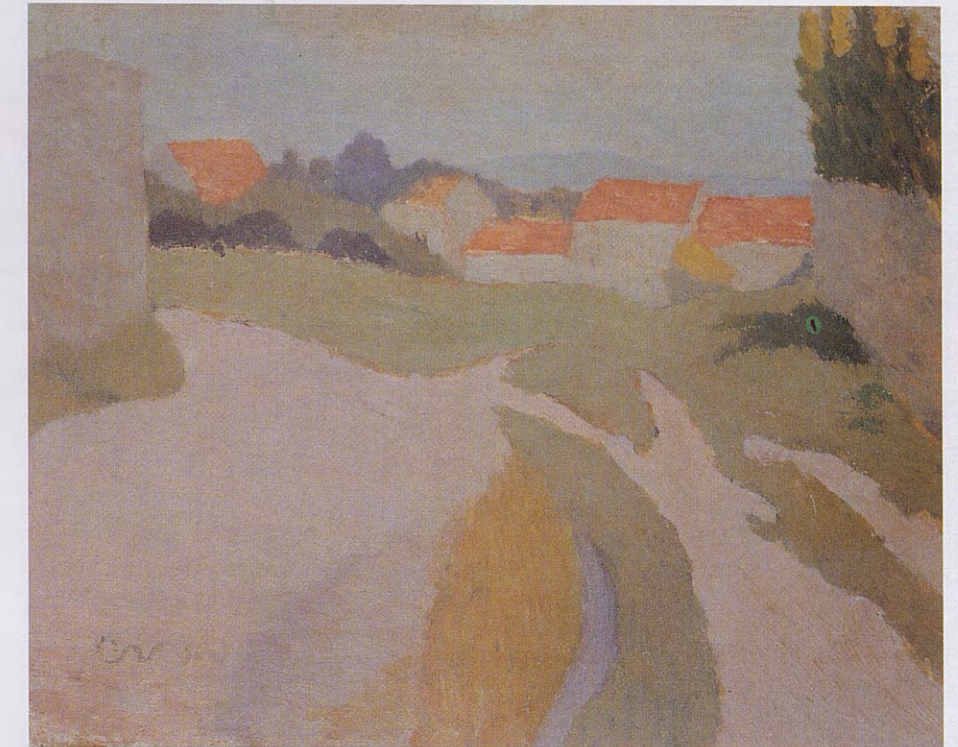
II-51

## II-52 The Red Roofs

1890  
Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 24.2 × 30 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 90*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Adams Brothers, London – Miss Blythe, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 29 April 1964, lot 76 (ill.) – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – A. J. Hicks, London, 1964 – Renou et Poyet, Paris, c. 1985 – Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** London, Tooth & Sons, April-May 1969, no. 1 (ill.) – Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Le Prieuré, 1985-86, no. 415 (col. ill.) – Paris, Berès, 1988; and 1990, no. 97 (col. ill.).



II-52

## II-53 The Violet Beach

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 27 × 35.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, Great Britain

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hallsborough, London – George T. Bowdoin, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 24 April 1963, lot 71 (ill.) – Anthony Samuel, London – Private collection, Great Britain.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 184 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 7 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Dorival 1957, p. 21 – Abbate 1966a, col. fig. 13 – Barilli 1967b, p. 104 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *A group of men standing on a cliff which, as a result of the unusual lighting, has a cyclamen colour. The sky and sea in the background are the same blue-green. To the left, a mauve silhouette leans on a balustrade; in the foreground, at bottom right, a woman in black is bent over like a washer-woman, her face the same colour as the cliff. A large mauve cloud is in the sky. (JS)*



II-53



## II-54

## The Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Chartres

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard, 36 × 20 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Mayor, London – Captain Richard A. Peto, Isle of Wight (Great Britain); Mrs Rosemary Peto, London – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Great Britain, travelling exhib., 1951-52, no. 31 – Plymouth, City Museum, 1960, no. 84.

**Description:** *Ultramarine sky with long white trails of cloud. The façade of the cathedral is pitted with blacks and browns, and black birds can be seen flocking around the spires.* (JS)



II-54

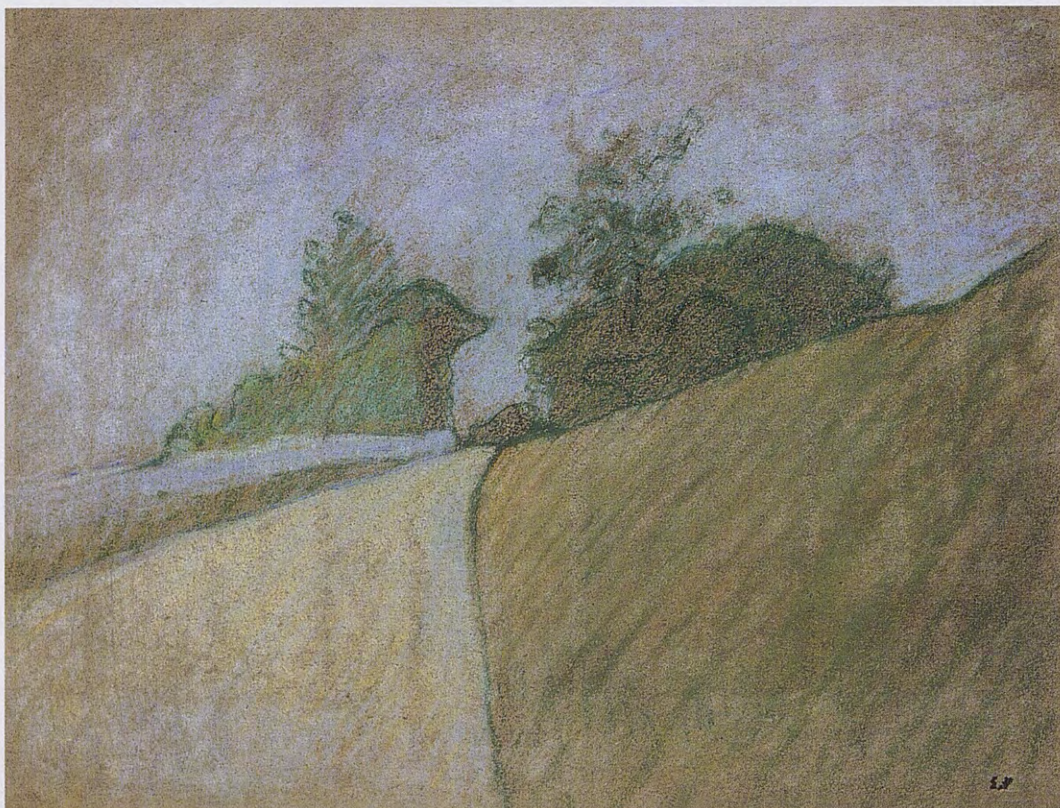
## II-55

## The Purple-Pink Road

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 26.5 × 16 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 2 March 1973, lot 54 (col. ill.) – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Description:** *The road shifts from pink to purple as it winds its way through splashes of green. To the right is a yellow wall. Blue tree-trunks and turquoise sky. A small, intensely coloured winter landscape. At the centre, the unprimed cardboard shows through.* (AC)



II-56

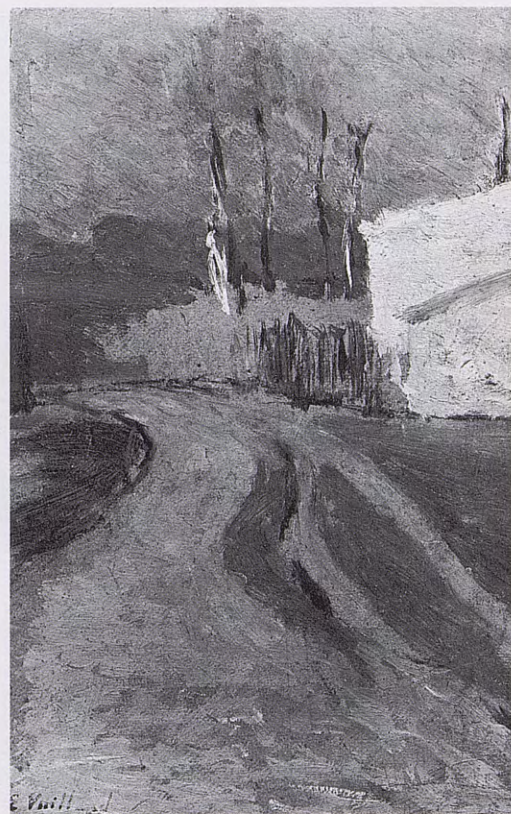
## II-56

## The Road

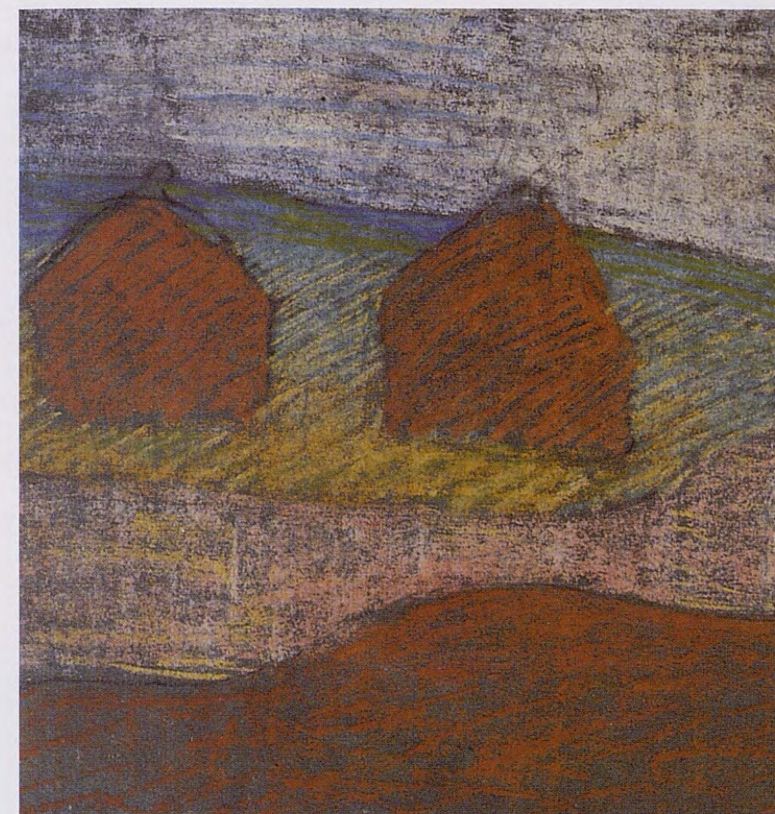
c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 24.7 × 32 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.

**Exhibitions:** London, JPL, 1988, no. 7 (col. ill.) – Lausanne, Vallotton, 1989, no. 42 (col. ill.) – Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 33 (col. ill.).



II-55



II-57r.

## II-57

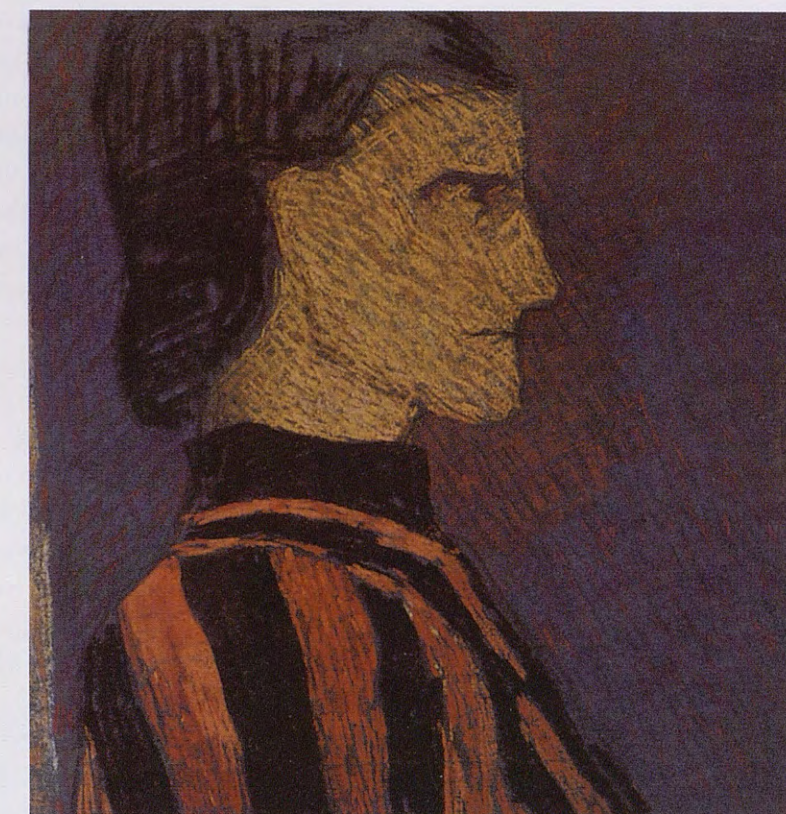
The Haystacks [recto]  
Man in Profile [verso]

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 23.2 × 21.9 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right on recto  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne (Australia) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 12 May 1993, lot 137 (col. ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Melbourne, Tolarno Galleries, 1981, no. 7 (ill.).

A canvas that constitutes a rather amusing *exercice de style*, since on one side we find a stiff rendition of the kind of profile portrait favoured by Piero della Francesca, and, on the other, a Synthetist and pre-Cubist vision of haystacks in a field, a subject that was to become Monet's favourite theme in 1891.



II-57v.

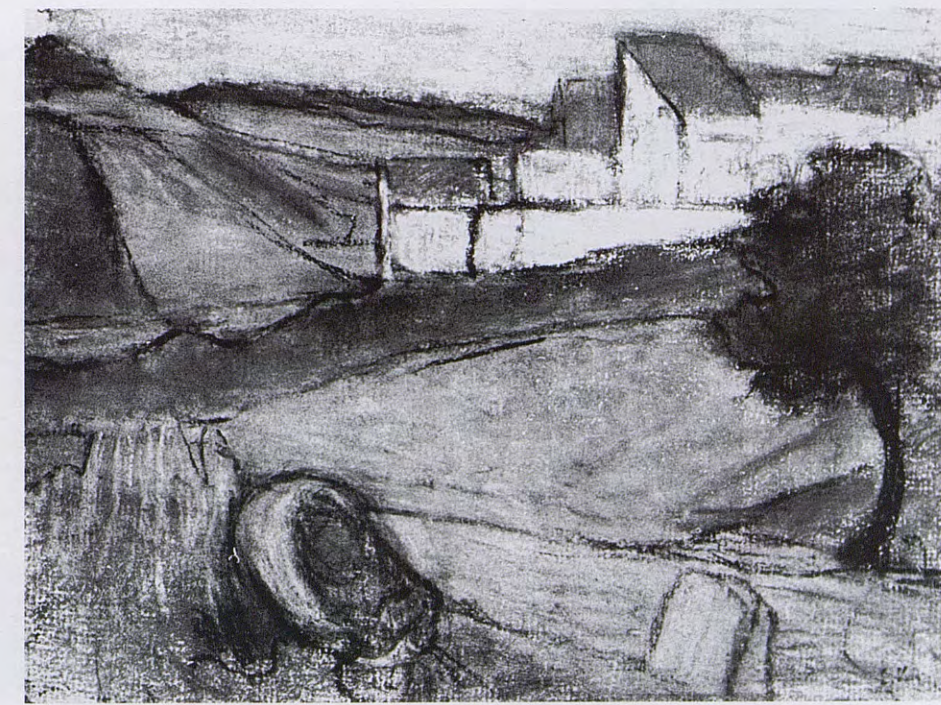
## II-58

## 'Breton' Landscape

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 15 × 21 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Art market, Lausanne (Switzerland)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne.

**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79, no. 19.



II-58



## II-59

### Ox in a Meadow

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 31.4 × 48 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

This is one of the few landscapes to suggest a possible pilgrimage on Vuillard's part to Pont-Aven, under the aegis of his friend Sérusier in 1890. In her interesting doctoral thesis on Vuillard's *Journal*, Françoise Alexandre states as certain (Pouldu landscapes, Breton head-dresses) what we still consider to be no more than possibilities.<sup>1</sup> In the 'autobiographical notes' set down at various points in his *Journal* (1896, 1905, 1908, 1927), Vuillard makes no mention of a stay in Pont-Aven, though he does note in obsessive detail all his other journeys. In a brief summary that can be dated to 1905,<sup>2</sup> he notes: '90 [the] year of Sérusier', but below this: 'Nov 85-86 Louvre journey to

Cuiseaux 2 setbacks' (this, despite the fact that a quick visit to his birthplace at eighteen years of age was no great undertaking). The most complete summary dates from 11 and 12 November 1908:<sup>3</sup> '89... at the end of Nov. and December military service at Lisieux... / 90 meet Sérusier. Bonnard through Denis... countryside at St-Maurice. Créteil'.

These outlying villages, unspoiled as yet by urbanisation, are the only places he remembers visiting. A stay in a community of painters at Pont-Aven, with its boisterous folklore and rites, would, in all likelihood, have made a more powerful impression on him. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the young painter, from the moment he joined the Nabi movement, made forays along the Normandy coast<sup>4</sup> – see II-53 and II-83 – perhaps during his military service at Lisieux.

Although Sérusier and the style of the Pont-Aven school exercised a marked influence on Vuillard in 1890, he was never much taken with Breton primitivism, sceptical city-dweller that he was. The fact remains, however, that this landscape, which is less

cramped than many of his sketches at that time, resembles the design for a large decorative ensemble for a town-hall.

<sup>1</sup> Alexandre 1998, pp. 166-184.  
<sup>2</sup> E. V., *Journal*, I.2, fols. 77r-78r.  
<sup>3</sup> Ibid., II.2, fols. 12r-16r.  
<sup>4</sup> Ibid., I.1, fol. 60v.

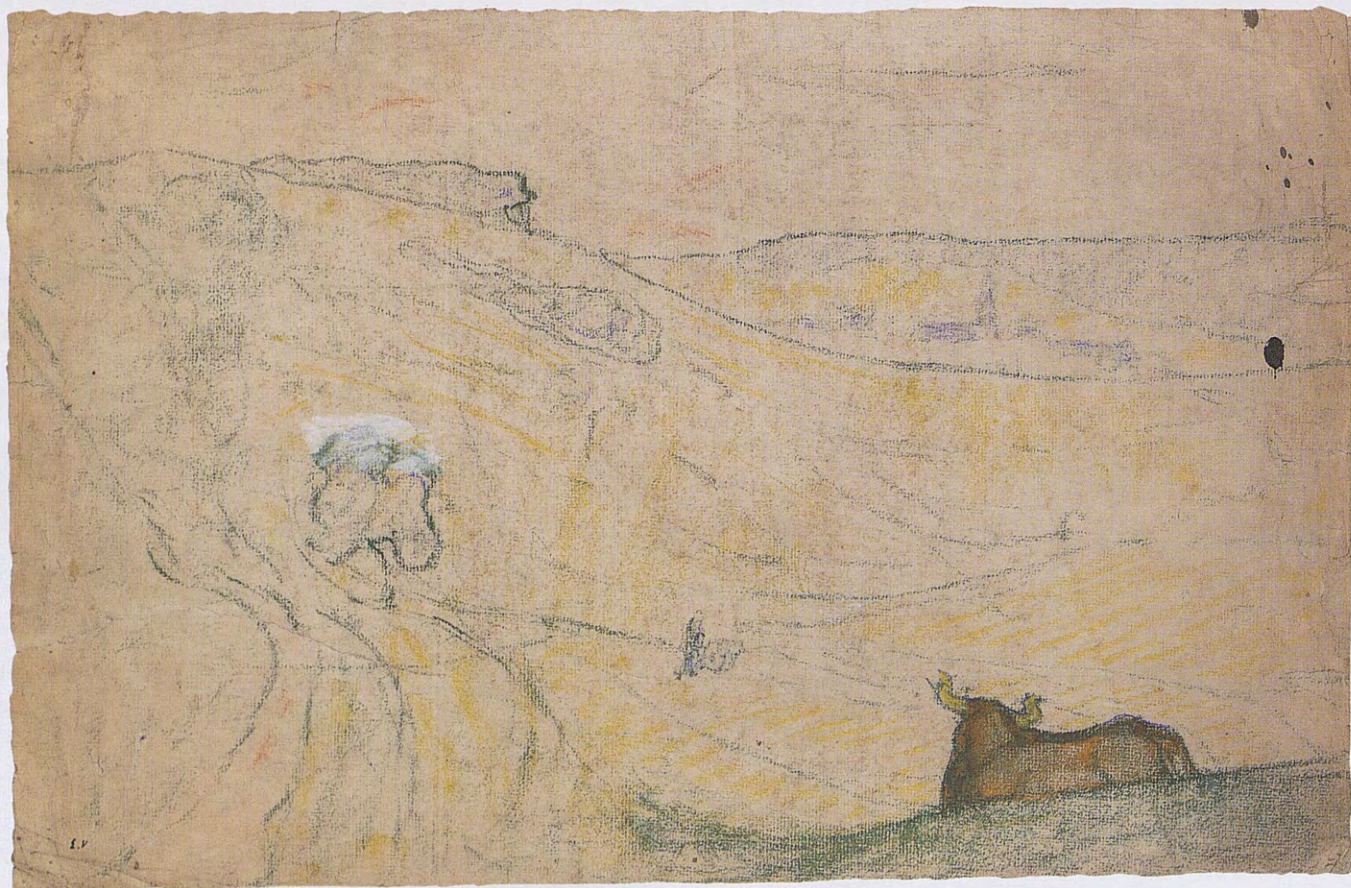
## II-60

### The Horse

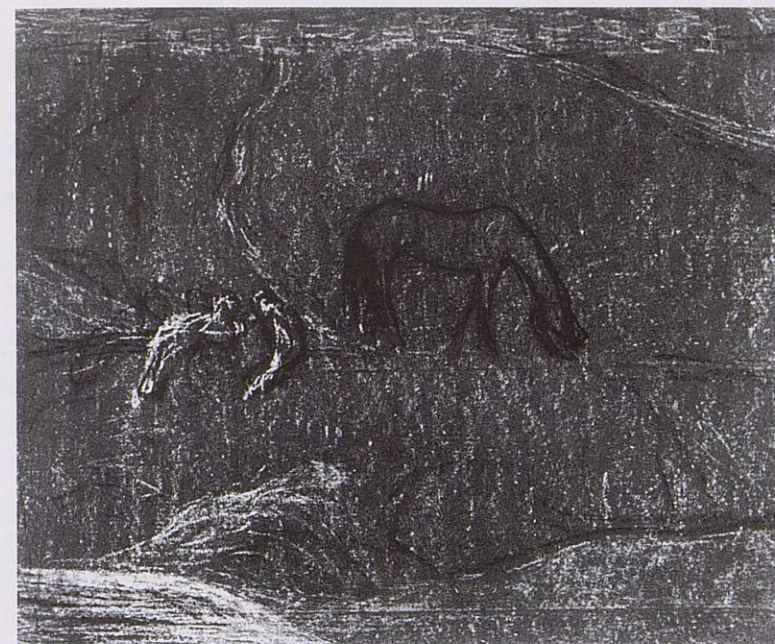
c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 33 × 40 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
**National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (Australia), P48-1981**

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne – National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1981.

**Exhibitions:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79, no. 23 – Melbourne, Tolarno Galleries, 1981, no. 6 (col. ill.).



II-59



II-60

## II-61

### The Cliff

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 31.5 × 47.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.

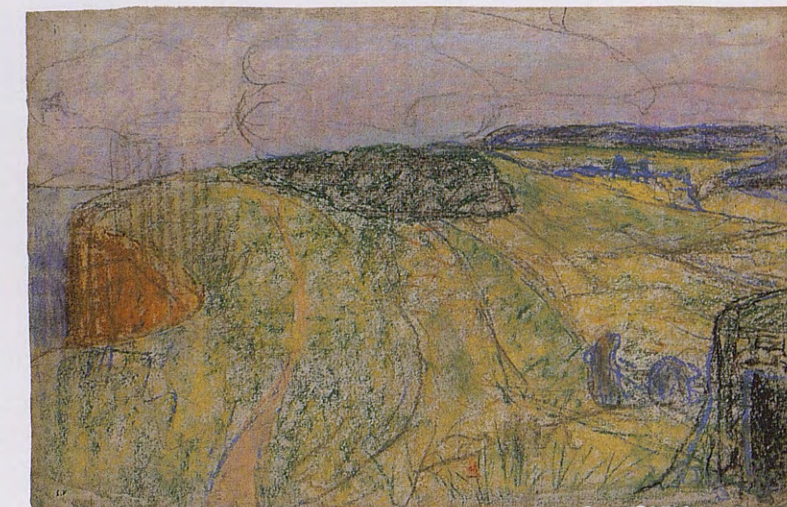
**Exhibitions:** Melbourne-Sydney, 1985, no. 45 (ill.) – London, JPL, 1988, no. 8 (col. ill.) – Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 34 (ill.) – Stuttgart, Kunsthaus Bühler, 1996, p. 20 (col. ill.).

## II-62

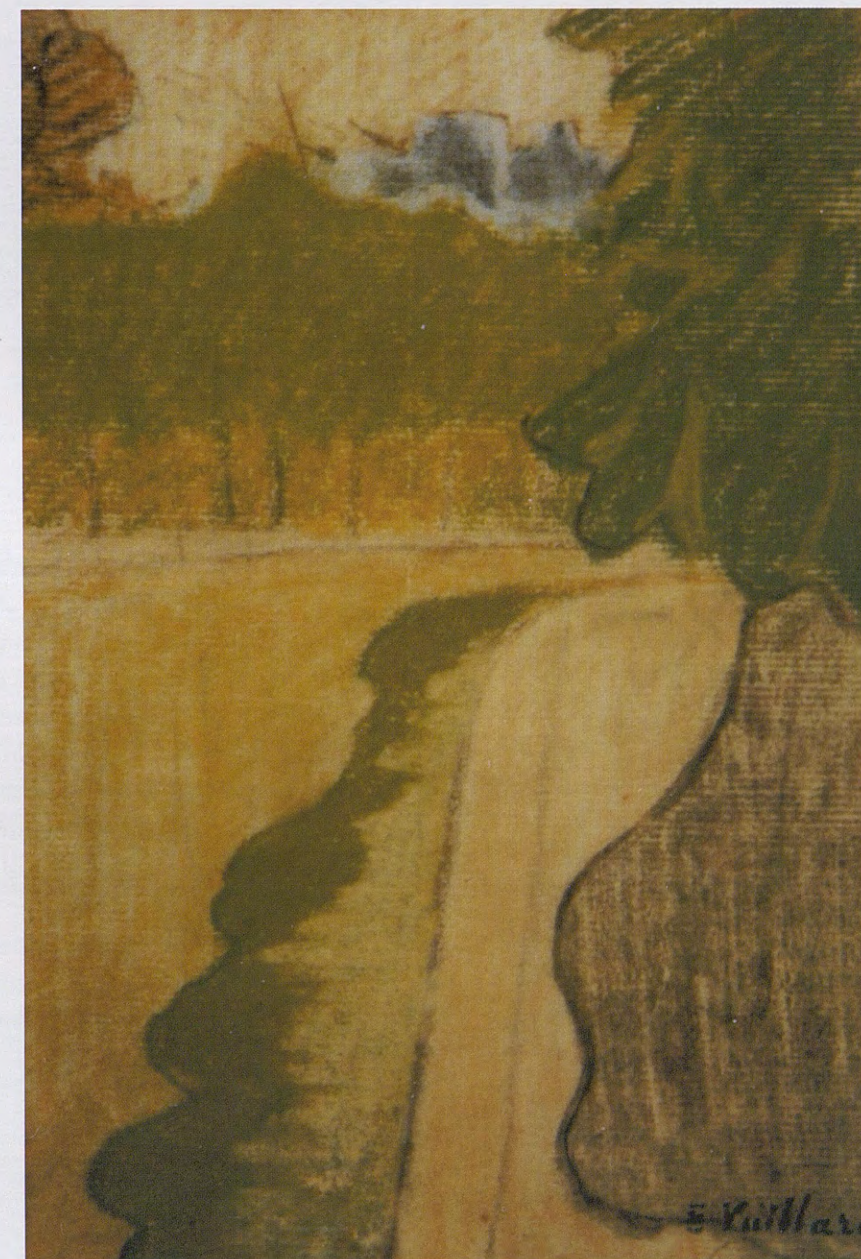
### Landscape with Road and Trees

c. 1890  
Pastel and charcoal on paper, 21.7 × 15.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Brame et Lorenceau, Paris, 1988 – Current whereabouts unknown.



II-61



II-62





II-63r.



II-63v.

## II-63 Study Sheet

Compositions I [recto]  
and II [verso]

c. 1890  
Charcoal and pastel on paper,  
63 × 47.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower right, recto  
Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.

The style of this hitherto unpublished study-sheet is very similar to that of the first two notebooks of Vuillard's *Journal*. The painter presents us with a collage of disparate planes out of which his mother's face emerges, highlighted with pastel, alongside landscapes seen in Synthetist perspectives, high-angle caricatures and fashionable women seen from the back. All in all, these studies suggest affinities between the young Nabi painter and Émile Bernard, the rising star of Synthetist painting at the time. The ease with which the young Vuillard fits

together, sometimes side by side, widely differing views foreshadows his virtuoso skills as a stage-designer between 1910 and 1920. Both in his sets for the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and in his decorations for Camille Bauer, *At the Louvre*, where the 'windows' the artist opens in the wooden panelling lining the walls afford an unusually wide range of perspectives, the overall effect is determined, not by a single line of vision but by the style, wit and texture of the painting (see XI-179.1).



II-64

## II-64 Young Lady with a Hat-Veil

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 48 × 29.3 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, Germany

Provenance: Artist's studio – Kunsthandel Sabine Helms, Munich (Germany) – Private collection, Bad Homburg (Germany), c. 1991.

Exhibition: Bremen, Werner, 1983, no. 10 (col. ill.).



II-65

## II-65 A Young Laundress

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 48.2 × 30.5 cm  
Stamp 2, lower left  
Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.

Exhibition: Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 12 (ill.).

Though only a brief sketch, it looks as though the young lady in this composition is transporting a bundle of linen, an activity that would have been commonplace in Mme Vuillard's dress-making studio.

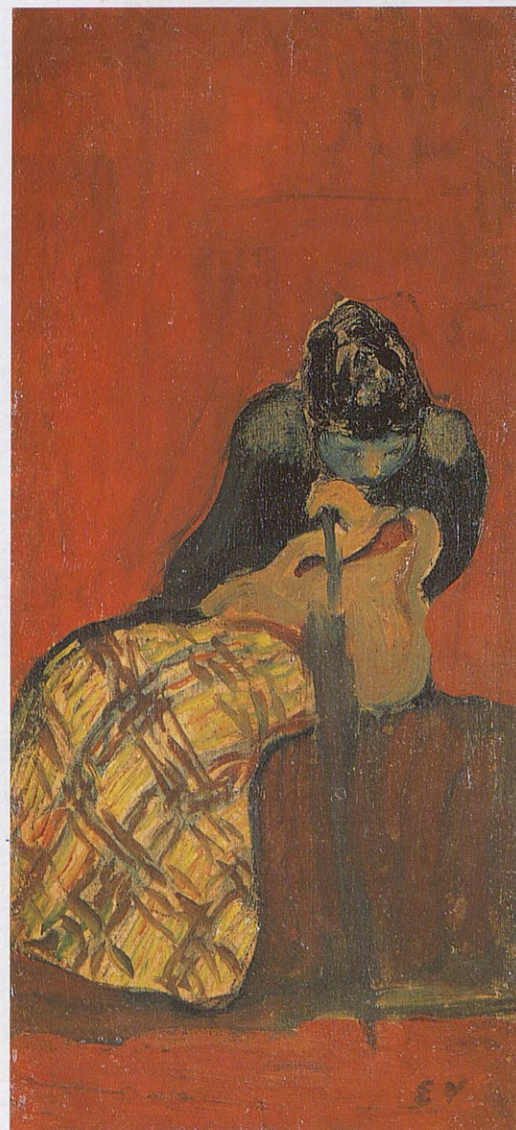




II-66



II-67



II-68



II-69

## II-66 Woman and Child in a Train

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard, 42 × 35.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Mr and Mrs Alex M. Lewyt, New York – Private collection.

**Description:** A young lady wearing a mauve and yellow blouse and a black skirt sitting on a grey bench-seat, with a child in a pink dress resting her head on the lady's knees. The woman has a red rose in her hair. The setting suggests the compartment of a railway carriage. The varnish has caused the colours to blur slightly. (AC)

## II-67 Woman and Baby

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 25.5 × 15 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris.

## II-68 Seated Woman Leaning on an Umbrella

c. 1890  
Oil on hardboard, 23.5 × 11 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris – Josefowitz Collection – Galerie Bellier, Paris, 1984 – Galerie Daniel Malingue, Paris, 1985 – Alain Lesieutre, Paris – Sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris, 17 Nov. 1994, lot 328 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 95.

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 21 (ill.).

**Description:** A woman wearing a blue plaid dress. (JS)

## II-69 Seated Woman

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 19.8 × 11.3 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 23 Oct. 1978, lot 159 – Mme Grati Baroni de Piqueras, Paris – Sale, Hôtel des ventes, Enghien-les-Bains, 17 April 1983, lot 52 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 27 June 1984, lot 323 (col. ill.) – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 10 Dec. 1986, lot 13, bought in – Private collection, Paris.

## II-70 The Bustle

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 62 × 12 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Green-sleeved, ochre-pink dress. Pink background. (JS)

## II-71 The Orange Camisole

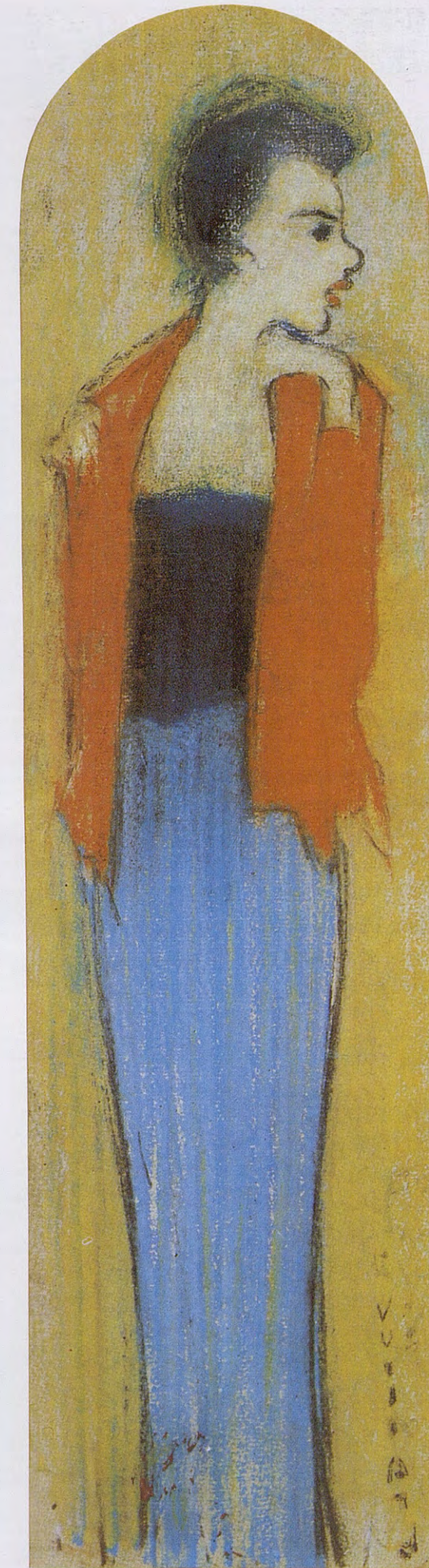
c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 53.5 × 20.5 cm  
Signed vertically, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Fiquet, Paris – Georges Lurcy, New York – Lurcy sale, Sotheby's, New York, 7 Nov. 1957, lot 6 (ill.) – Robert Q. Lewis, Beverly Hills (California) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 5 Dec. 1962, lot 38 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 13 Dec. 1967, lot 48 (ill.) – James Vigevno, Los Angeles (California) – Baldwin M. Baldwin, Pasadena (California) – Louis Stern, Beverly Hills (California) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 5 Dec. 1984, lot 312 (ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** New York, Seligmann, 1948, no. 1 [Singer in red].



II-70



II-71



## II-72

## The Boa

c. 1890-91

Pastel on paper, 59 × 13 cm

Signed, lower left: *EV*

Private collection

**Provenance:** Ernest Coquelin Cadet, Paris – Coquelin Cadet sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 26 May 1909, lot 77 – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 17403) – Henry Bernstein, Paris, 31 August 1909 – Mrs Jane Pickins Langley, New York; Mrs Thomas Mc Cormack, New York – Private collection, United States – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris – Private collection.

**Description:** *A woman wearing a hat and a long, striped coat, squeezed into a tightly cropped frame.* (JS)

This quick and delicate sketch highlights the exaggerated stylisation that characterized women's fashion at the time against a monochrome orange ground: it was in the early 1890s that the woman's coat as we think of it today first made its appearance. This particular model, with its characteristic hip-height fold of fabric, was probably introduced by the English. The tall, narrow frame is known as a kakemono, a format that Vuillard, unlike Bonnard and Ranson, used only sparingly – his *Woman at the Balustrade* (see ill.) was not long in the off-



Paul Ranson, *Woman at the Balustrade or Woman with a Poodle*, 1895, oil on canvas. Private collection.



II-72

ing. This fashionable young lady with a boa is a sort of Baudelairean *passante*, allowing us only a fleeting glimpse of her face as she glances round. In his Journal for 1888-90, Vuillard drew many figures in motion of this kind, sketched at random in the street; for the moment, they provided a discreet refuge for his timid sensuality.

## II-73

## Marie Arranging Her Hair

c. 1891

Pastel on paper, 22.5 × 22 cm

Stamp 3, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's Arcade, New York, 12 Oct. 1991, lot 11A (ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 87.

## II-74

## Woman Asleep with Her Legs Drawn Up

c. 1891

Pastel on paper, 23 × 17.5 cm

Signed, lower right: *ev*

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Alexandre Natanson, Paris – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 85 [*Femme accroupie*] – C. M. De Hauke, Paris, 22,000 F – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 26881), 5 June 1937, 8,000 F – E. Martin, Paris, 13 March 1939, 15,000 F – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 23 June 1961, lot 97 – Sale, Hôtel George V, Paris, 13 Dec. 1995, lot 47 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 25.

## II-75

## Woman Smiling

c. 1890-91

Pastel on paper, 27.3 × 24.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hammer, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 Dec. 1982, lot 107 (col. ill.), bought in – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas, Paris – Galerie Berès, Paris.

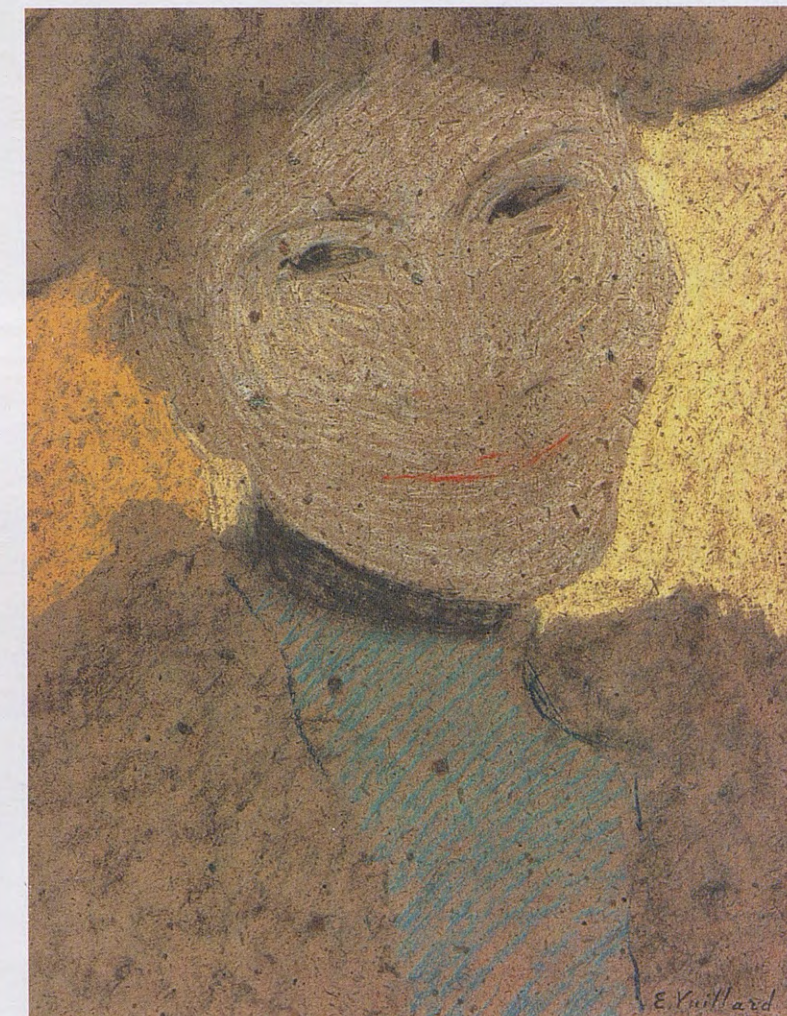
The violent lighting breaks up the face, which looms up out of the canvas like some evil apparition; in reality, the woman's face has been placed under a ghostly spectrum of light, as though it had been reconstructed with magnetic waves or was the outcome of some spiritualist séance during which hallucinogenic substances had been consumed. For all its simplicity, the image is disconcerting and once again reveals the artist's pent-up violence and anguish.



II-73



II-74



II-75





II-76

## II-76 Portrait of a Young Boy

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper (?), 22.5 × 25 cm  
Signed, lower left: *EVuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Estate of Mervyn LeRoy, United States – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 13 Nov. 1996, lot 138 (col. ill.) – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris – Private collection.

This astonishing portrait is both Synthetist – its palette is vivid and distinct – and surprisingly naturalistic. Whereas the prepara-



E. V., preparatory sketch for *Portrait of a Young Boy*, graphite on paper, 22 × 17.5 cm.  
Private collection.

tory sketch, which is similar to the drawings that appear in the artist's *Journal* for 1890 (see ill.), suggests a certain timidity, the pastel drawing reveals blue eyes gazing into space and just a slight puckering of surprise as the face looks away.



II-77

## II-77 Woman With a Fur Collar

c. 1890-91  
Oil on canvas, 21 × 14.5 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Nathan L. Halpern, New York – Private collection, United States.

**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, p. 295, fig. 155.



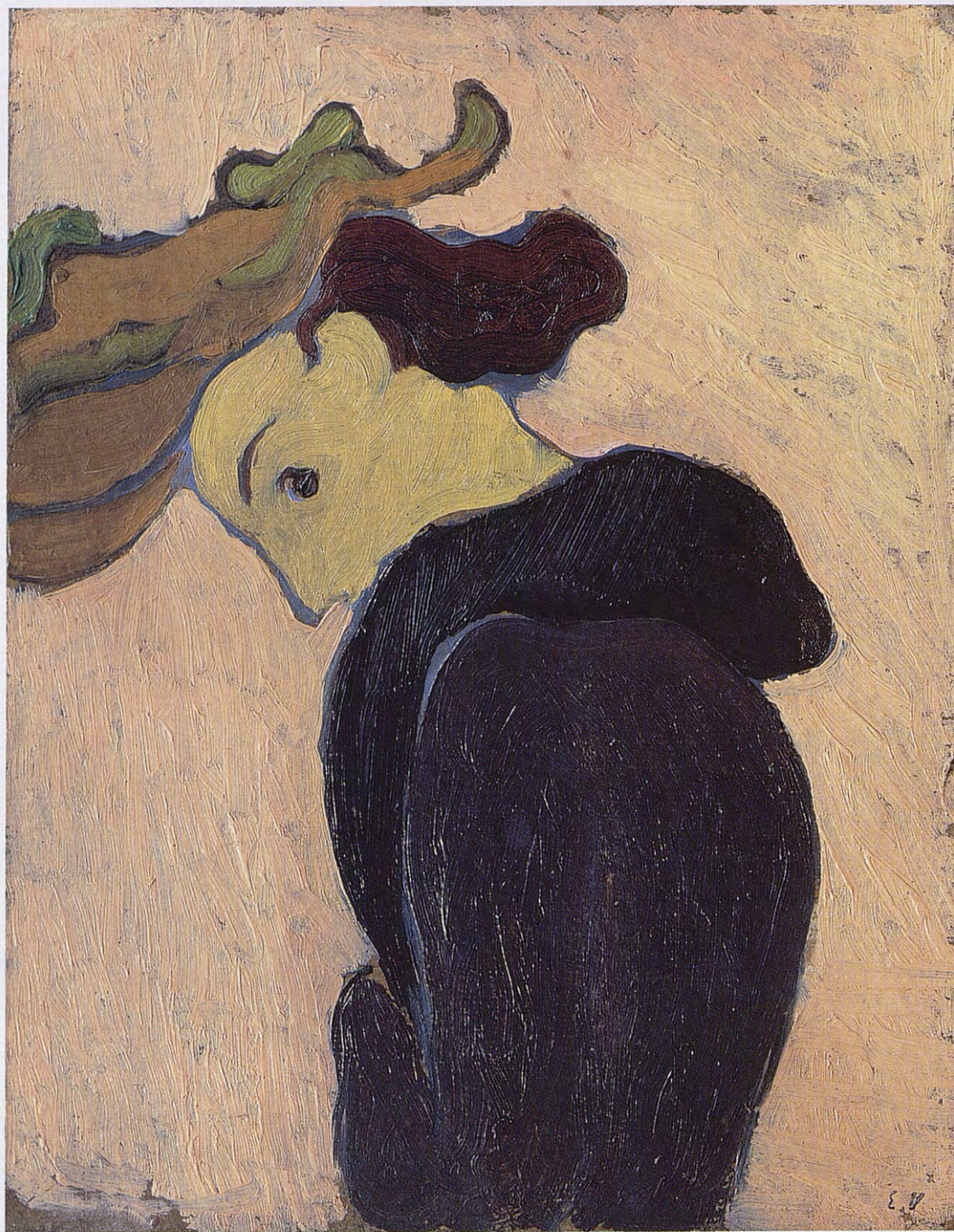
II-78

## II-78 Woman in a Blue Peignoir

c. 1891-92  
Pastel on paper, 24 × 20 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hammer, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 31 March 1982, lot 169a (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 21 Feb. 1990, lot 170 (col. ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.





II-79

## II-79 Woman in Profile Wearing a Green Hat

c. 1890-91  
Oil on cardboard, 21 × 16 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1990-14

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Acquired by the Musée d'Orsay as payment in kind, Paris, 1990.

**Exhibitions:** London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 114 – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 195 – Paris,

Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 187 (ill.) – Paris, Musée Cernuschi, 1958-59, no. 404 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 8 – Tokyo-Kyoto, 1961-62, no. 245 (ill.) – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-64, no. 307 (ill.) – Berlin, Haus am Waldsee, 1965, no. 49 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1972, no. 883 (ill.) – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 14 (col. ill.) – Tokyo-Osaka-Fukuoka, 1979-80, no. II-82 (col. ill.) – Paris, Orsay, 1990-91, p. 143 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 144 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Barilli 1967b, p. 119 (ill.) – Mauner 1978, p. 221, fig. 57 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 15 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A dark-haired young lady in a black coat, against a pink background. Grey hat with green stripes. The firm outline around the figure forms a gracious arabesque.

This is the same model whom Vuillard used in *The Boa* (II-72), only this time the framing is tighter. Vuillard does not present us with a symbol of elegance as such, but creates a more experimental, inward-looking work. The timid figure withdraws into herself, seeking refuge beneath her hat (a 'bibi' typical of the early 1890s), while the blue rings about the eyes give a glow to the face.

## II-80 Woman in a Feathered Hat

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 47.5 × 30.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Germany

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 Dec. 1981, lot 191 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 30 June 1982, lot 114 (col. ill.) – Private collection, Bad Homburg (Germany).

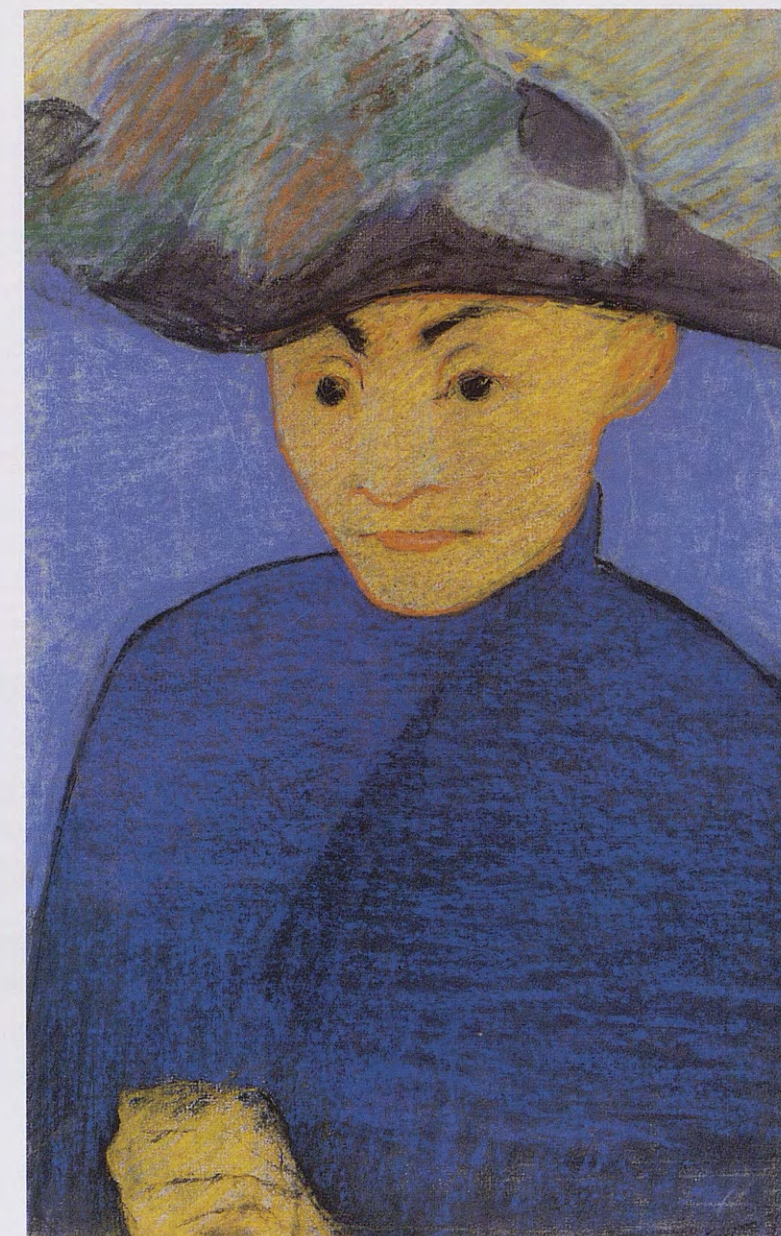
**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, p. 296, fig. 157.

## II-81 The Singer

c. 1890-91  
Oil on canvas, 21 × 27.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – David Findlay Galleries, New York – Curtis Calder, Texas.

**Description:** The head of a woman in various shades of green and pink, against an orange and red background. The comic expression on her face puts one in mind of the singer Yvette Guilbert. (AC)



II-80



II-81



II-82

## II-82 Woman with a Parasol

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 35.2 × 21.2 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris.





II-83

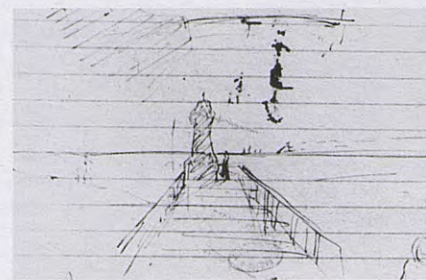
## II-83 Man in a Top-Hat

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 24 × 20 cm  
Stamp 1, upper right and lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

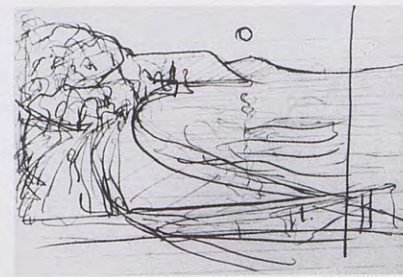
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 July 1981, lot 318 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

Standing on the landing-stage of a jetty with a bay stretching out behind him, a man whose face we cannot recognise is wearing a cape (an 'Inverness cape' to be more precise) and a top-hat, that form of headgear of which an inspired but, as it happens, none too far-

sighted Mallarmé would say: 'The world will end, but not [the top-hat]'.<sup>1</sup> The composition is a rather unusual one for Vuillard, for we know of few seaside paintings by him during this period. In his 1890 Journal, there are various sketches of jetties and bays, but it is impossible to tell whether they correspond to journeys he had made during weekend forays to Normandy or are imaginary views (see ill.). As for the character's identity, it is prob-



E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 60v.



E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 45v.

ably of no importance; perhaps it is one of the painter's friends, Henri Colmet d'Aâge (see I-88), for instance. More likely, it is a faceless self-portrait of Vuillard himself; one need only recall the retrospective drawing Bonnard made in 1910 in honour of the early years of the Nabis, in which Vuillard, in the company of Roussel and Bonnard, is depicted in the same attire, a top-hat and cape (see ill.). The excessive stylisation of the techniques employed places this pastel somewhere between Émile Bernard and Edvard Munch, whose famous *Scream*<sup>2</sup> was in the offing.



Pierre Bonnard, Roussel, Vuillard and Bonnard in front of the Moulin Rouge, in 'La Vie du Peintre', 1910. Private collection.



Pierre Bonnard, Portrait of Vuillard, 1892, oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

<sup>1</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Sur le chapeau haut de forme', *Le Figaro*, 17 January 1897, reprinted in *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, NRF, 1945, p. 882.

<sup>2</sup> Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, tempera on wood, 83.5 × 66 cm, Munch Museet, Oslo.

## II-84 Reverie

c. 1890  
Pastel and pencil on paper, 30 × 24 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 29 June 1994, lot 132 (col. ill.) – Josefowitz Collection – Private collection.

Two transparent women in the style of Maurice Denis are engrossed in reading, which would appear to heighten their communion with nature. The work is in a Symbolist and 'Bretonising' vein that is relatively rare in Vuillard's painting at this period.

## II-85 Two Women in a Wood

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 37 × 50 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Maurice Denis, Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 13 July 1960, lot 92, bought in – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 18 Nov. 1961, lot 118, bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 222 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 245 [*Figures au bois*, 1895].

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 185.

**Description:** Two women in striped dresses sitting beside a group of young trees. To the right are two standing women, one wearing red, the other orange. (JS)

This pastel drawing, which originally belonged to Maurice Denis and is very much in keeping with his taste, depicts two women in striped dresses that are distinctly Art Nouveau *avant la lettre*, somewhat in the manner of Edmond-François Aman-Jean, and two further women in brightly coloured tunics standing in the background. There is probably no precise subject for this scene, which has a deliberately Symbolist atmosphere.



II-84



II-85





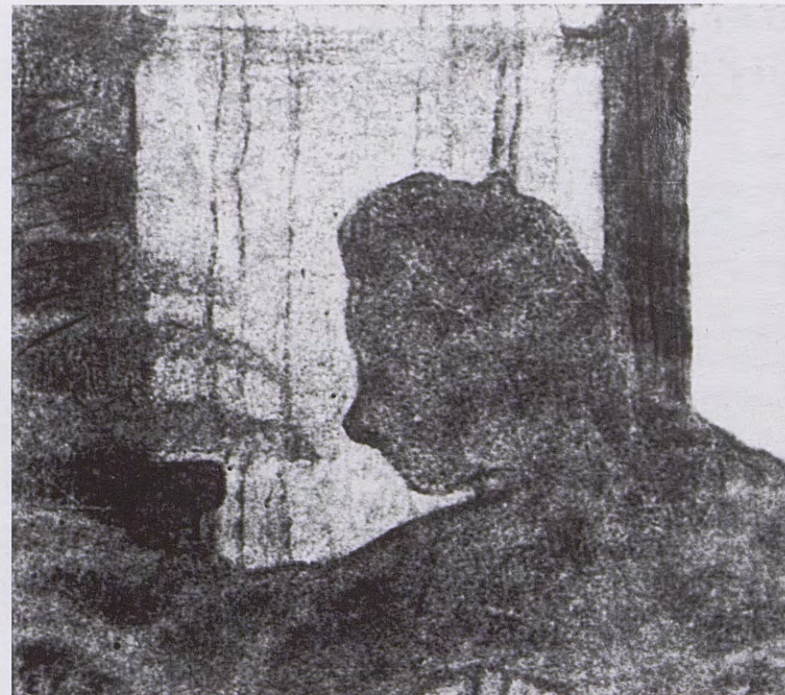
II-86

## II-86 The Two Parasols

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 23.5 x 30.5 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Henri Menuel, Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France).

**Description:** *Two parasols, one seen 'full-face' the other 'in profile', in a garden. Synthetist treatment.* (AC)



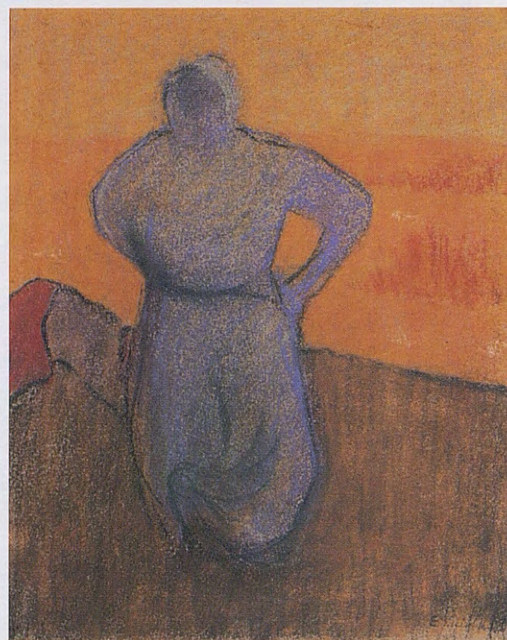
II-87

## II-87 Profile of Marie against the Light

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 18 x 20 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *Marie's profile stands out like a Chinese shadow against the curtain; the other half of the window, to the right, is curtainless and bright yellow.* (JS)



II-88r.

## II-88 Woman Walking, with Her Hands on Her Hips, front view [recto], back view [verso]

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 27.3 x 22.7 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 30 Nov. 1988, lot 421 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.



II-88v.



II-89

## II-89 Woman Putting on an Apron

c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard, 25 x 20.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alfred Vallotton, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *In front of a light yellow window, a woman spreads her arms as though passing her apron about her waist. The colour of her bust is similar to that of the cardboard support, but tends more towards ochre.*



II-90

## II-90 Woman Ironing

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 28.5 x 18.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Prouté, Paris, c. 1987 – Current whereabouts unknown.



II-91

## II-91 Silhouette on Stage, study

c. 1891-92  
Pastel on paper, 24.5 x 17 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.



## II-92 The Fitting

c. 1891-92  
Pastel on paper, 32.7 × 21.3 cm  
Stamp 2, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hirschl & Adler, New York – Arthur G. Altschul – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 22 May 1981, lot 818, bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 12 Nov. 1987, lot 139 (col. ill.) – Private collection, New Jersey – Sale, Christie's, New York, 11 May 1995, lot 218 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.



II-92

Some commentators have thought to see in this ambiguous scene a silhouette on stage, but it is more likely that it depicts a fitting, since what has been taken to be a Greek *chiton* is probably just a form of petticoat (of the type later called a 'fortuny'). Moreover, the young lady is wearing ankle-boots, has no headband in her hair to keep a 'Greek' coiffure in place and, last but not least, is standing before a window – three considerations that make the possibility of a theatre stage unlikely. However, II-91, which is probably a preparatory sketch, could plausibly be connected to the stage. The silhouette therefore remains ambiguous.

## II-93 The Compartment

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 19 × 13 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
**The California Palace of the Legion of Honor, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (California),**  
Acc. no. 1988.10.30

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris, c. 1955 – Whitney Warren, Jr. – Whitney Warren, Jr. bequest to the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1988 in memory of Mrs. Adolph B. Spreckels.

**Description:** *This painting would seem to depict the compartment of a train. A woman in greyish beige is twisting round in front of a bright rectangle in which a landscape can be discerned. A woman in black is seated to the left. To the right is a sort of bench seat decorated with red and black lacework. The unusual, rather disconcerting position of the woman has been caught on the wing by Vuillard's eager eye. (AC)*

## II-94 Woman in the Doorway

c. 1891  
Pastel on paper, 21 × 14 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Mr Samama, The Netherlands – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 29 Nov. 1977, lot 277 (col. ill.), bought in – Paul Prouté, Paris, c. 1984 – Current whereabouts unknown.

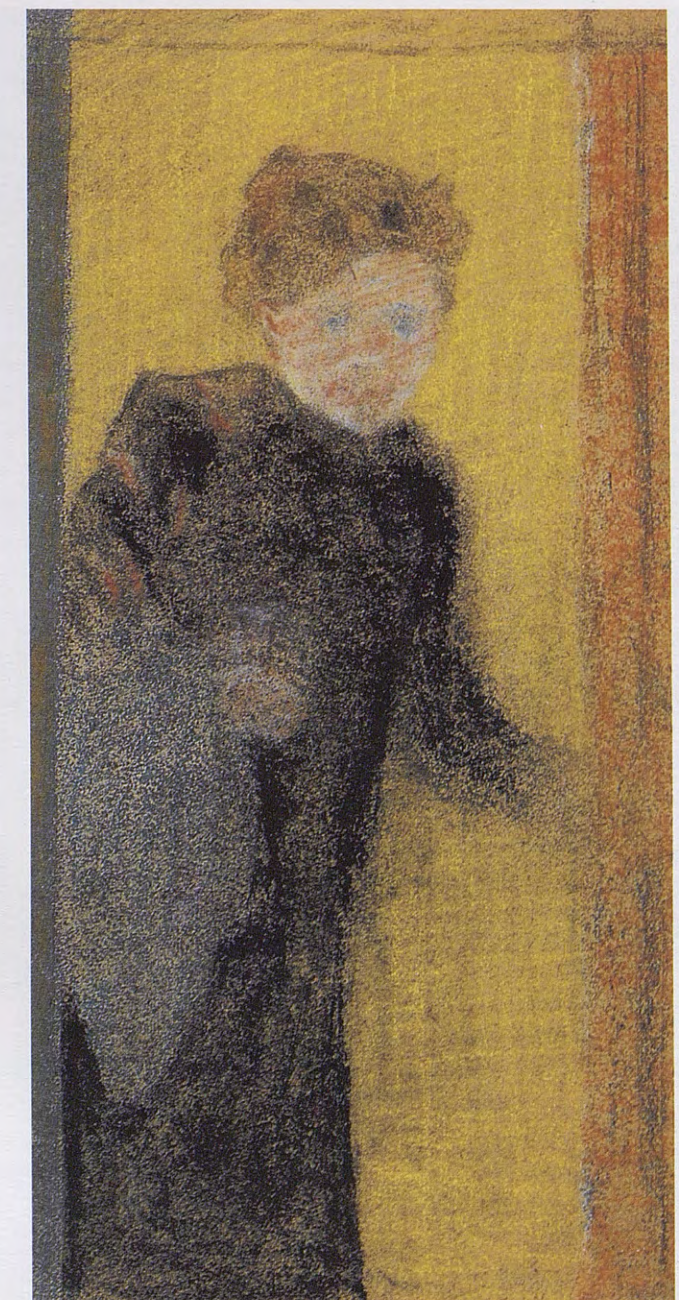
The impression is a fleeting one: a woman in a brown peignoir stands in a doorway that forms a yellow screen behind her. This pastel sketch should be seen in conjunction with IV-99.



II-93



II-94



II-95

## II-95 Woman in the Doorway

c. 1891  
Pastel on paper, 37 × 18 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right; stamp 2, lower right and lower left  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – O'Hana, London – Walter Wonger – Sale, Christie's, New York, 14 Nov. 1984, lot 213, bought in – Sale, Christie's, New York, 16 May 1990, lot 121 (col. ill.) – Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.

**Exhibition:** Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 31 (col. ill.)





II-96

## II-96 Man on a Staircase

c. 1891  
Pastel on paper, 23.3 × 16.7 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock  
(Arkansas), 2001.035.001

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Arkansas Art Foundation purchase for the Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, 2001.

**Exhibitions:** Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 32 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 3, p. 31 (ill.).

The picture is highly ambiguous and barely legible, but we can perhaps make out the beginnings of a banister in the bottom left-hand corner and the twist of that same banister at the top.



II-97

## II-97 Woman in Front of a Glass-Partitioned Door

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 19.3 × 17.2 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Albert Skira, Geneva – Galerie Rosengart, Lucerne (Switzerland) – Fred Uhler, Neuchâtel (Switzerland), 1945 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 31 [*Devant la porte*, c. 1898] – Neuchâtel, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, 1956, no. 190; and 1975, no. 97.

**Description:** *The silhouette of a woman wearing a hat is seen against the light streaming through an oddly shaped window; a piece of linen hangs on the wall.* (JS)



II-98

## II-98 Old Woman Climbing Some Stairs

c. 1891  
Pastel on paper, 27.5 × 18.1 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne (Australia) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Melbourne, Tolarno Galleries, 1981, no. 10 (col. ill.).

## II-99 Rue de Miromesnil, the Landing

1891  
Oil on cardboard, 39 × 24 cm  
Signed and dated, upper right:  
*e. vuillard / 91*  
Private collection, Canada

**Provenance:** Louis Carré, Paris – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 10 May 1950, lot 130 – Galerie Gas, Paris – E. J. Van Wisselingh, Amsterdam – Private collection, Canada.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Carré, 1942, no. 17 [*L'Escalier*] – Paris, Charpentier, 1944, no. 143 – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. II (col. ill.) – London, Royal Academy, 1979-80, no. 232 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1980, no. 147 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 37 (ill.) – Montreal-Paris, 2000-01 (not in cat.).

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 13 (ill.) – Salomon 1961, pp. 32-34 (ill.) – *L'Œil*, no. 83, Nov. 1961, p. 56 (ill.) – Jalard 1966, p. 61 – Mauner 1978, p. 257, fig. 134 – Georges 1982, pp. 51, 155 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 165-167, 322, fig. 56 – Easton 1989, pp. 58, 60, 67 – Forgione 1992, pp. 118, 143-144, fig. 72.

**Description:** *A landing with a dingy, tiled floor on a winding flight of stairs. The bright yellow light from the floor below appears at the bottom of the painting, beneath the banisters. A woman in black half-opens a barely visible door, casting a rectangle of light on the ochre and green wall which is then reflected, along with the light from the stairwell, onto the lower edges of the steps at the top of the painting. The blacks used for the banisters, the silhouette and the landing give a curious density to this small painting. One of the first really solid achievements of Vuillard's art.* (AC)

The scene is openly mysterious and nocturnal, like *Interior, Mystery* (IV-218) or *Dinner Time* (IV-2). At the same time, the lighting effect, which casts the shadow of the banisters onto the winding stairs, make a nighttime interior more likely. Starting out from the irregularly tiled landing, Vuillard creates a corridor seen in a precipitous, headlong perspective in which a female figure appears, *Grand-mère* Michaud. True to his quest for the *multum in parvulo*, the painter succeeds in conjuring up on a tiny surface all that falls within the scope of 'the wide angle from which he embraces whatever presents itself to



II-99

his gaze'.<sup>1</sup> He does not spare us the radical detail of the window of light standing out sharply against the wall and forming a painting within the painting. Ciaffa has noted the resemblance of the spiral staircase to those painted by artists of the Dutch school (particularly Rembrandt). The artist's grandmother appears here as a figure of old age set down at the heart of an everyday embodiment

of eternity, underlined by the monumentality of the stairway's perpetual winding motion. Vuillard adopts a somewhat distant perspective, as though his forebear, seeking light at the heart of an unstable universe, has found it at last it by grace of a knowledge granted to us after death.

<sup>1</sup> Salomon 1961, p. 32.





II-100

## II-100 The Two Doors

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard, 31.5 × 14.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Berès, May 1957, no. 65 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 12 (ill.) – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 6 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 7 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 37 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 15 (ill.) – Montreal-Paris, 2000-01, p. 331 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1961, p. 32 (col. ill.) – Mauner 1963-64, fig. 4. – Salomon 1968, p. 51 (col. ill.) – Mauner 1978, pp. 254-255, fig. 128 – Georges 1982, pp. 51, 168 – Daniel 1984, pp. 113, 115, fig. 34 – Koella, exhib. cat., Zurich and Paris, 1993-94, p. 95, fig. 7.

**Description:** In a red-tiled corridor, a half-open door giving onto a dining-room. To the left, the small grey door of an open cupboard overlaps with the other door, so that their identical colours merge. To the right is a painting seen in perspective. An unusual touch is the gleams of light above the door. (AC)

This is a 'non-subject' *par excellence*: a cupboard door overlapping with a dining-room door and all but indistinguishable from it. Vuillard loves compositions of this kind, in which depth of field is partially obscured by a succession of masks and where only a few brief signs provide pointers to an elusive reality. This vision of things derives not only from Dutch painting – Terborch in particular – but also has affinities with Belgian Symbolist painting of that time. To convince oneself of this, one has only to com-



Xavier Mellery,  
*Interior with an  
Open Door*, n.d.,  
oil on canvas.  
Private collection.

pare the extreme simplicity of these *Two Doors* with Xavier Mellery's *Interior with an Open Door* (see ill.). George Mauner, for his part, has sought to show links with Symbolist theatre: 'Maeterlinck speaks of an open door at the end of the corridor. Might he have been thinking of the small picture Vuillard painted a few years earlier? *The Two Doors* is the perfect embodiment of that silent subject'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mauner 1978, p. 255.

## II-101 Interior with Red Curtain

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard, 45 × 28 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Feilchenfeldt, Zurich (Switzerland) – Charles Lock Galleries, New York, 1959 – Lehman Collection, New York – David Nash, New York, 1998 – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot – Private collection.

**Description:** A doorway with a grey door and a red curtain, and to the right of these a child in blue crouching beside a basket on the floor. In the foreground, to the left, is a green and yellow bottle shot through with light on a light-coloured cloth streaked with red. (JS)



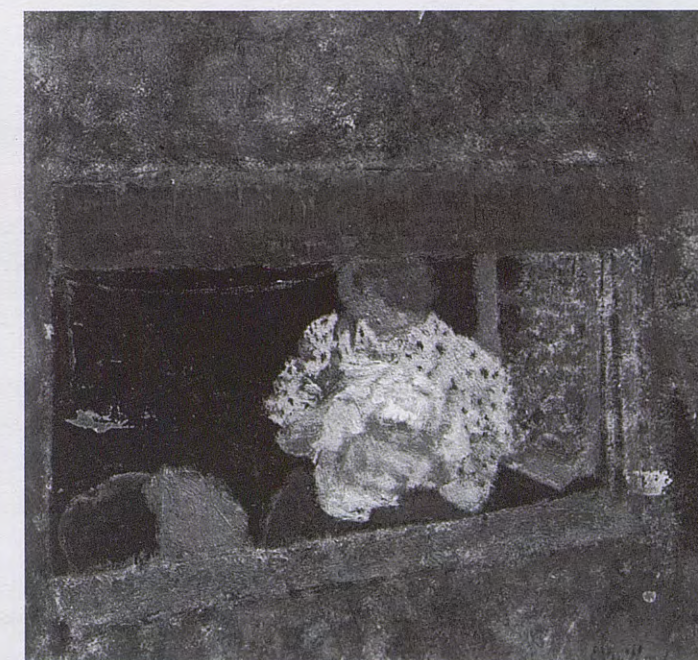
II-101

## II-102 Woman by a Window

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 21 × 21.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: E. Vuillard  
Israel Museum, Jerusalem, B98.0702

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Girard, Paris – Israel Museum, Jerusalem, bequest of Johanna and Ludovic Lawrence, B98.0702

**Description:** The woman is seen from outside, standing in front of an open window on the right. The upper part of her face is concealed by a lowered blind. (JS)



II-102





II-103

## II-103 The Fitting

c. 1890  
Pastel on paper, 42.5 x 31.3 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.

**Exhibitions:** Melbourne-Sydney, 1985, no. 41 – London, JPL, 1986-87, no. 52 (col. ill.) – Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 25 (col. ill.) – Stuttgart, Kunsthauß Bühler, 1996, p. 16 (col. ill.).

## II-104 The Dressmakers

1890  
Oil on canvas, 47.5 x 57.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York – Mr and Mrs Ira Haupt, New York – Doris Warner Vidor, New York – Richard L. Feigen Gallery, New York, 1983 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 19 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 36 (ill.) – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 63 – London, Wildenstein, June 1948, no. 11 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 16 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 16 [*Les Couturières*, c. 1898] – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1951, no. 337 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 164 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 32 (ill.), 100 – United States, travelling exhib., 1960-61, no. 299 – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 4 (ill.) – New

York, Christie's, 1968, no. 31 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 8 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Sutton 1948, p. 47 (ill.) – Chastel 1954, p. 39 (col. ill.) – Ritchie 1954, p. 12 – Wald-fogel 1963, p. 73, fig. 8 – Preston 1971, fig. 21 – Thomson 1988, p. 36, col. pl. 17 – Easton 1989, pp. 24, 36-37, 39, 166 – Makarius 1989, pp. 63, 64 (col. ill.), 65 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, pp. 75, 78 (ill.) – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 18 (ill.) – Cousseau and Ananth, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, pp. 162, 166-167, 168 (col. ill.) – Forgione 1992, p. 96, fig. 52 – Terrasse 1992, p. 107 (col. ill.) – Boyle-Turner 1993, pp. 38-39 (col. ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 26, 57 (col. ill.) – Ellridge 1993, p. 100 (col. ill.).



E. V., perspective sketch for *The Dressmakers*, charcoal and pastel on paper, 47.5 x 53.7 cm. Private collection.

To the art-lover familiar with modern painting, *The Dressmakers* appears first and foremost as a jigsaw-puzzle of interlocking, undulating flat colours in which the two women grappling with the fabric are a kind of counterpart to the Breton women who observe the struggle between Jacob and the angel in Gauguin's *The Vision after the Sermon*<sup>1</sup> (1888), a key Nabi painting which Vuillard will certainly have remarked at the 'Café Volpini' show in 1889. The picture clearly depicts Madame Vuillard and Marie, seen in a convex plane of vision very similar to that used in Gauguin's cult painting. A preparatory pastel sketch, in which *Grand-mère* Michaud has been added to the group, presents a more traditional composition, reminiscent of the Dutch school and seen from a discreetly suggested high-angle view (see ill.). In two previously unpublished drawings, Marie's face is delicately sketched in smooth, flowing lines that speak volumes about the progress Vuillard had made during 1890, since the painting can safely be dated to the autumn of that



II-104



E. V., Sketch of Marie's Face, charcoal on paper, 22 x 17.5 cm. Private collection.

year (see ills.). Relying, in his preparatory sketches, on an observation of reality that owes as much to Rembrandt as to Le Sueur, and adopting a deliberately traditional style of drawing, Vuillard suddenly opts for a dogmatic Synthetism when he sets about painting the canvas.

Today the object of great critical acclaim, the painting was not given the honour of a public exhibition until after the last war. The outline of the large piece of red fabric may be seen as a scar, an allegory of the sep-



E. V., Sketch of Marie's Face, charcoal on paper, 22 x 17.5 cm. Private collection.



aration between canvas and pigment, while the light brown band separating the two lengths of fabric is an apt metaphor for the partly visible canvas. 'The marked flatness of the picture-surface, the absence of shading and the compartmentalization of the coloured areas give the composition a patchwork effect in which it is hard to distinguish the form from its support.'<sup>2</sup> For his mother, Vuillard has reserved the delicate grey tints of a high-angle view. His sister, on the other hand, has a bright pink face and red cheeks – a sign of the modesty he intends to force on her as if by fate – and a silhouette that stands out sharply against the dark blue-green background. It is a particularly powerful image of submission to duty and to the sacred rhythms of sewing, rendered in an impeccably Synthetist style.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Gauguin, *The Vision after the Sermon*, 1888, oil on canvas, 73 × 92 cm, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.

<sup>2</sup> Cousseau and Ananth, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, p. 166.



II-105

## II-105

### Marie Holding a Bowl

c. 1891

Oil on cardboard, 23 × 16 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art,  
University of Oklahoma, Norman  
(Oklahoma), 2000.013.031

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – François Reichenbach, Paris – Jacques Lindon, Paris – Jeanne Castel, Paris – David Findlay, New York, c. 1963 – Aaron M. and Clara Weitzenhoffer, Oklahoma City (Oklahoma) – Weitzenhoffer bequest to the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman (Oklahoma), 2000.

**Exhibition:** New York, Findlay, 1963, no. 42.

## II-106

### Mother and Daughter against a Red Background

c. 1891

Oil on cardboard, 18 × 18 cm

Stamp 4, lower right

Private collection, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection, London.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Parvillée, 1943, no. 73 – London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 115 – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 196 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 189 [*Mère et fille sur fond rouge*, c. 1892] – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, pp. 19-20, no. 8 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Mauner 1978, pp. 211-212, 260, fig. 159.



II-106

**Description:** *Madame Vuillard is seated facing the viewer, wearing an ochre dress, the outlines of which are of the same green as the features of her face and their shadows. To the left is her daughter in a dark blue dress, sitting with her hands folded. Vermilion background.* (JS)

In a deliberately 'Expressionist' manner, Vuillard here depicts the two pillars of the family home: his mother and his sister, the two Maries. The monochrome background compartmentalizes the figures but, above all, heightens the viewer's sense of disquiet: how are we to interpret the terribly authoritarian expression of the mother and the self-effacing posture, pale face and wide-open eyes of the sister, huddled in the corner of the painting like some absinthe drinker?

## II-107

### Madame Vuillard in Red

1890-91

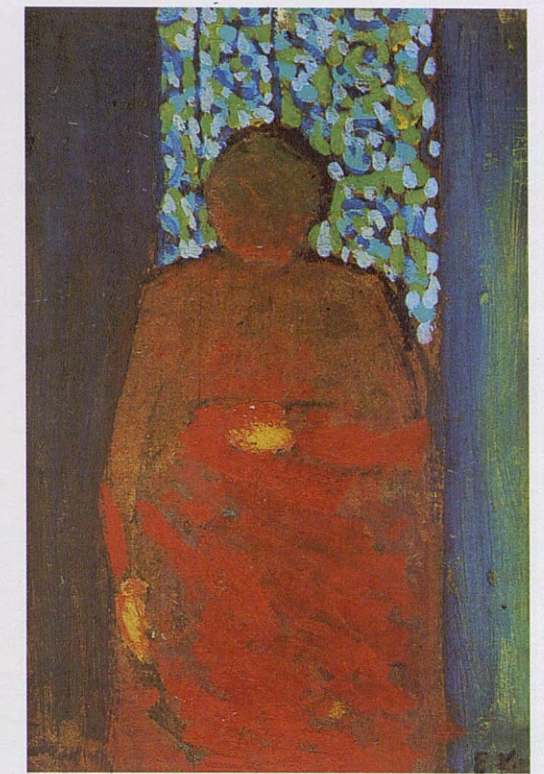
Oil on cardboard, 21 × 15 cm

Stamp 4, lower right

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Harry M. Goldblatt, New York, 1962 – Sale, Christie's, London, 24 June 1986, lot 120 (col. ill.) – Richard L. Feigen, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 11 May 1988, lot 320 (col. ill.), bought in – Daniel Malingue, Paris – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** London, Tooth & Sons, May 1962, no. 14 (ill.).

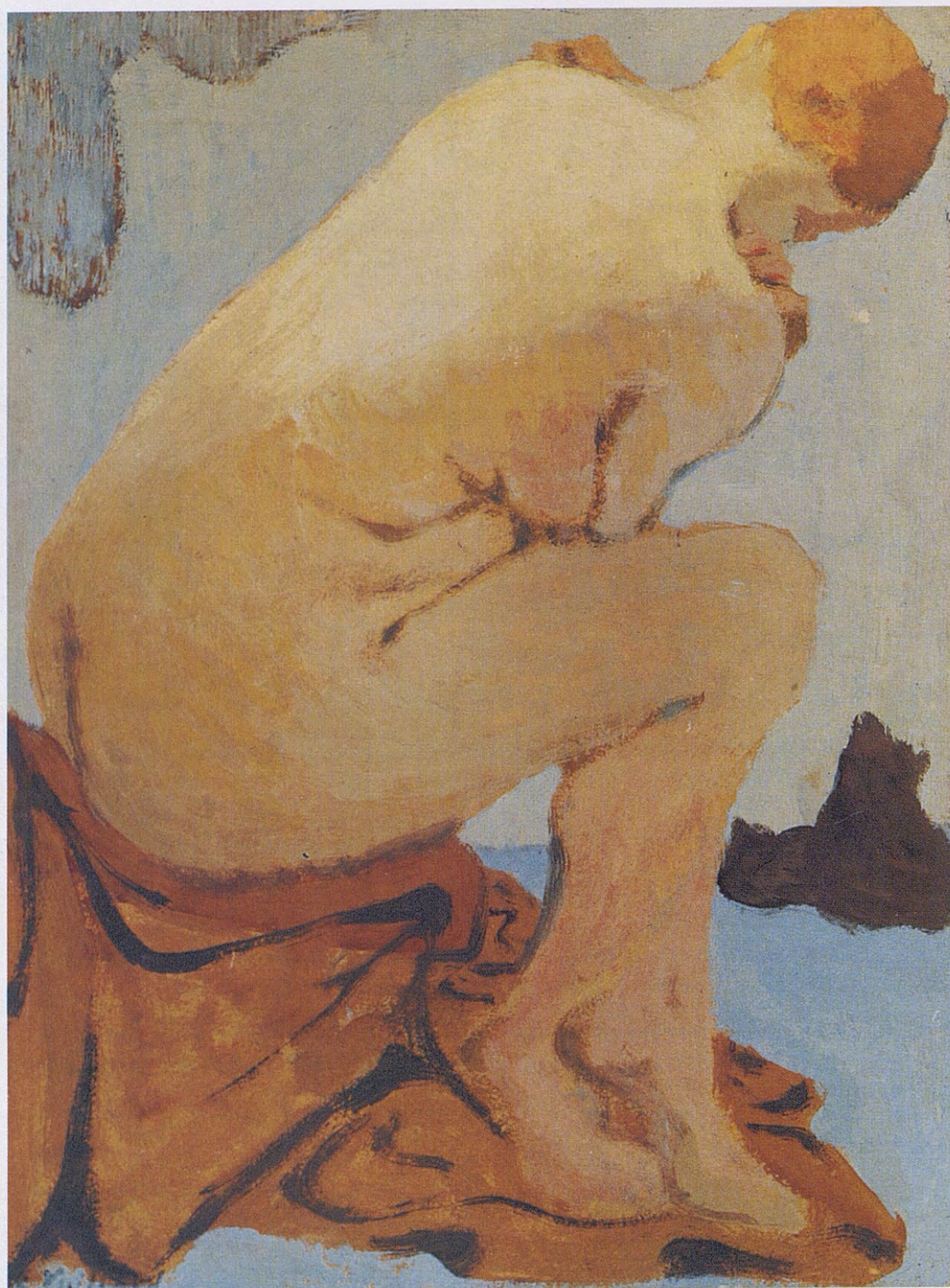


II-107

**Bibliography:** Cogeval 1993b, p. 26 (col. ill.).

The artist's mother stands out against a floral-pattern curtain lit from behind. The red, *da sotto in su* lighting heightens the unsettling character of the picture, turning the maternal figure into a coloured mass, a kind of incandescent Moloch or archaic, blood-stained idol. Vuillard here presents us with one of his more extreme moments of 'Fauvist' vision, as well as of his tendency to make his environments appear disturbing.





II-108

## II-108 Seated Nude

1891  
Oil on cardboard, 29 × 22.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arnoé, Paris – Jean-Pierre Selz, Paris – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 28 June 1969, lot 377 – Jan Krugier, Geneva – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 29 May 1972, lot 36, bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 29 March 1984, lot 516, bought in – Sale, Christie's, London, 2 Dec. 1986, lot 318 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 19 (ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, p. 37, no. 15 (col. ill.).

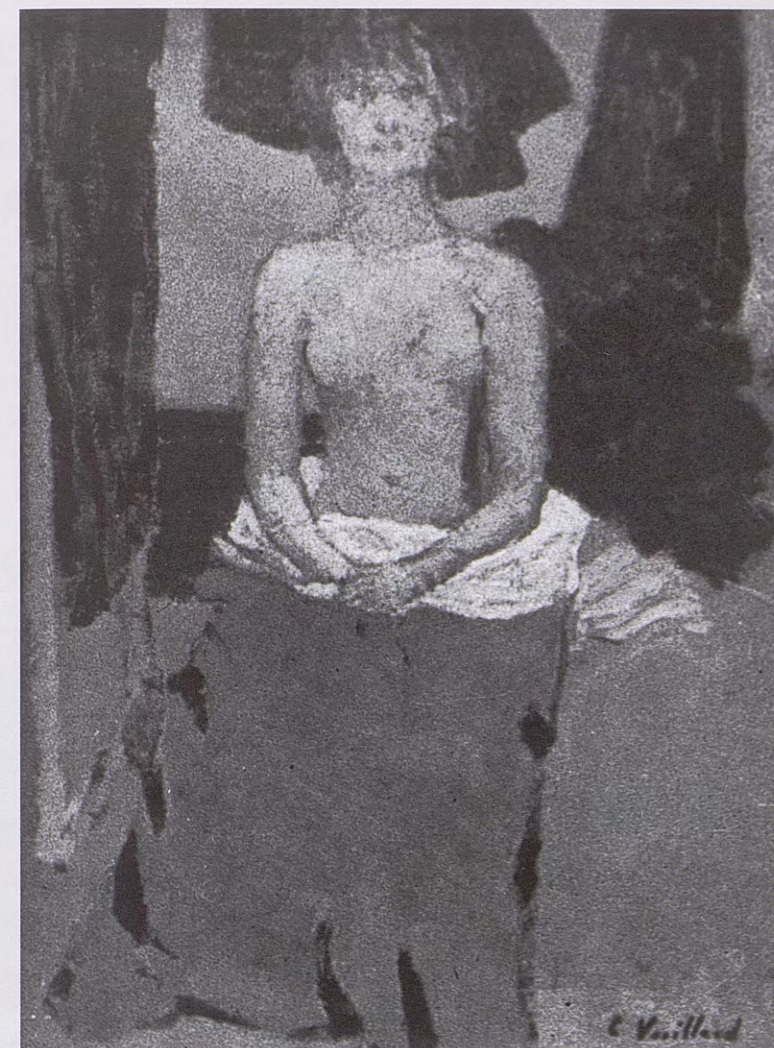
**Bibliography:** Thomson 1988, p. 32, col. pl. 19 – Easton 1989, p. 37 – Ellridge 1993, p. 94 (col. ill.).

Vuillard's first studio nudes are demonstrations of 'cloisonniste' aesthetics. The cardboard support permits a fuller modelling of flesh tones, while outlines are used to underscore the heaviness of the body. Note the effect of light on the woman's back and on the red chignon. In keeping with 'cloisonniste' principles (see II-26, II-28, III-37), the

strange arabesque in the top left corner acts like a rigid-flat, echoing the sinuous curves of the body. Let us also note that the face is once again turned away and the body strangely twisted. The choice of the model's pose may be derived from some archetypal *Susanna and the Elders* that had impressed itself upon the mind of the prudish young painter. Whatever the explanation, most of Vuillard's early nudes present curiously 'inward-turning' bodies and faces that are concealed from the spectator's gaze. The laying bare of a woman's body is clearly associated with original sin in Vuillard's mind. Let us also note that Bonnard painted a *Seated Nude* (see ill.) in which the same model is shown in the same pose.



Pierre Bonnard,  
*Seated Nude*,  
1891, oil on  
cardboard.  
Private collection.



II-109

## II-109 Seated Woman with Bare Torso

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard, 24 × 18 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Mme Eugène Zak, Paris, c. 1938 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 19 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 22.



II-110

## II-110 Reclining Nude

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard, 35.5 × 31.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Girard, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 53 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 32.

**Description:** A model reclining on a yellow sheet, her right breast resting in light-coloured linen, with bands of grey and brown in the background. Painted in broad strokes with a palette-knife, the plain black underpainting being used to denote the dark areas, the eyes and the pudenda. (AC)





II-111

## II-111 Nude with a Red Blanket

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard, 14 × 41.5 cm  
Inscribed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Bought from the artist by Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 9251, *Nu*), 31 March 1899, 200 F – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 39 [*Nu allongé*, c. 1900], 1953, no. 42, 1954, no. 59; 1969, no. 33; and 1973, no. 10.

**Bibliography:** George 1938a, p. 33 (ill.) – Mauner 1978, pp. 232–233, fig. 83.

**Description:** The shaded, cold tones of the body are highlighted by the bright red blanket at the model's feet. (JS)

The fine splash of red blanket disrupts the composition's restrained, monochrome effect and accentuates the tension in the model's pose. As in II-114, the naked girl appears prostrate, a position Vuillard seems to have hesitated over, judging by several study sheets made around the same period (see ill.). The elongated body, face hidden in hands, is an archetype of classical French painting (it can be found in the work of Poussin and Lemaire), though, as Séon's *Orpheus Laments*<sup>1</sup> (c. 1895) – a painting closer to Vuillard in time – reminds us, Symbolism was also responsive to it. Vuillard's painting is perhaps a variation on the theme of *Berthe au grand*

*pié*<sup>2</sup> (for which he designed the stage-sets) in which the queen, unjustly abandoned in the forest, laments her misfortune (see III-30). A wash drawing in India ink, datable to around 1890, may shed further light on the matter: in it a young lady, asleep in the same pose as in II-111, is surprised by a satyr, an erotic theme that was common in eighteenth-century painting and was to be carried to new heights by Picasso. This *Nude with a Red Blanket* is perhaps a variation, in the Nabi painter's hermetic vein, on the



E. V., *Jupiter and Antiope (7)*, c. 1890, charcoal or ink on paper, 10.2 × 13.4 cm. Private collection.

theme of the sleeping Antiope, threatened by Zeus. The painting by Correggio<sup>3</sup> today known as *Venus, Satyr and Cupid* and formerly in the collection of Louis XIV is one of the most famous paintings ever to be hung in the Louvre. Vuillard, in any case, had no shortage of works to choose from in the great French museum: one has only to think of that other *Jupiter and Antiope*,<sup>4</sup> by Watteau this time, which must have tantalized the future painters of the École des Beaux-Arts, and to which Vuillard would

much later allude in *At the Louvre*, the decorative ensemble he painted for Camille Bauer (see XI-179.1).



Detail of XI-179.1.

<sup>1</sup> Alexandre Séon, *Orpheus Laments*, c. 1895, oil on canvas, 73 × 116 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

<sup>2</sup> 'Big-foot Bertha', wife of Pepin the Short and mother of Charlemagne.

<sup>3</sup> Antonio Allegri Correggio, *Venus, Satyr and Cupid* (formerly known as *The Sleep of Antiope*), oil on canvas, 188 × 125 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

<sup>4</sup> Antoine Watteau, *Jupiter and Antiope*, oval canvas, 73.6 × 107.5 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



II-112

## II-112 Feet (study)

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 12 × 19 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hector Brame, Paris – Gimpel, London – Hans P. Juda, London, c. 1963 – Markus Stanley, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 Nov. 1967, lot 127 (ill.) – Michael Wishart Esq., Great Britain – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 4 Dec. 1975, lot 309 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 3 March 1982, lot 56 (ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** London, Tate Gallery, 1963, no. 101 – Sheffield, Graves, 1967, no. 154 (ill.).

**Description:** On a bright yellow sheet, the feet, outlined in pink, of a reclining figure cropped by a piece of dark grey fabric on the left. (AC)

The framing here is astonishing, and while it does not directly call to mind the charnel-house vision of Géricault, with his fearsome, romantic manner of rendering *membra disjecta* as though on the butcher's block, this sketch should nevertheless be



E. V., *Study of Feet*, charcoal on paper, 23.5 × 37.2 cm. Private collection.

seen in conjunction with the many anatomical studies scattered throughout Vuillard's youthful Journal. An unpublished study sheet (see ill.) clearly reveals it to be a preparatory sketch for II-111, since it accompanies a neighbouring drawing of the torso and head of the same model.

## II-113 The Oval Deshabillé

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard, 25 × 30 cm, oval  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 14 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 22 – London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 116 (ill.) – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 197 (ill.) – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 30 (ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 24 (ill.) – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 17 (ill.) – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 24 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 12 (ill.) and 1972, no. 773 (ill.) – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977–78, no. 7 (col. ill.).

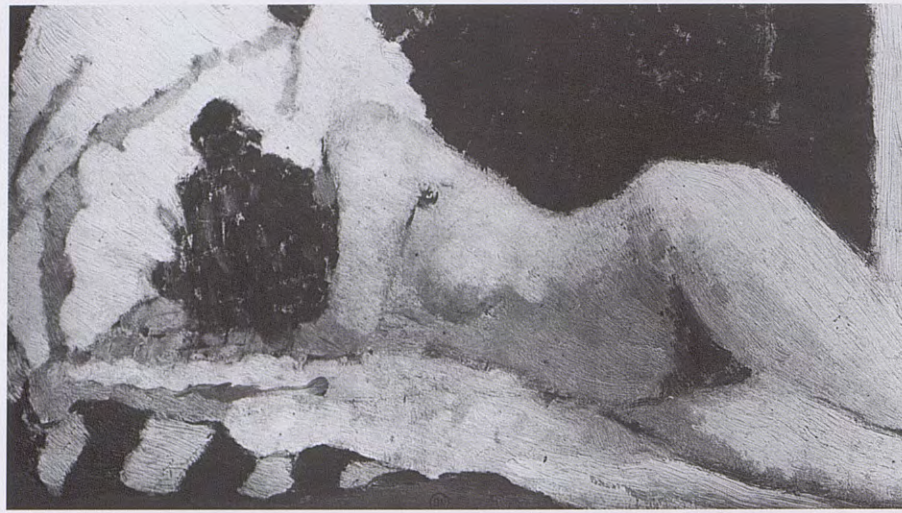
**Bibliography:** Chassé 1960, pl. 26 – *Lettres françaises*, 1 June 1961, p. 12 (ill.) – Salomon 1968, p. 53 (col. ill.) – *Paris Match* 1976, p. 122 (col. ill.) – Terrasse 1980, p. 122, col. pl. 25 – Georges 1982, p. 43 – Warnod 1988, p. 12 (col. ill.) – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, p. 73 (col. ill.) – Ferrier 1991, p. 780 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A brown-haired woman in a white shift and grey skirt, against a light yellow background. An item of red clothing on a chair to the left. Grey and pink-striped drapery to the right. (AC)



II-113





II-114

**II-114**  
**Small Reclining Nude,**  
 known as **The Striped**  
**Mattress**

c. 1891  
 Oil on cardboard, 19 × 33 cm  
 Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Bernheim-Jeune, Paris – Josse Bernheim, Paris – Seized by the Nazis at the Château de Rastignac in Dordogne (France), during the German occupation, 1944 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 68; May 1910, no. 127; and 1938, no. 4.

**Bibliography:** *Répertoire des biens spoliés en France* 1947, p. 155, no. 3540 (ill.).

**Description:** *A young girl reclining on a sheet laid over a striped couch and hiding her face in the crook of her arm. (JS)*



II-115

**II-115**  
**Seated Model, with Her**  
**Chin Resting on Her Hands**

c. 1891  
 Oil on cardboard, 18 × 20 cm  
 Stamp 3, lower right  
 Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hervé Odermatt, Paris, c. 1960.

**II-116**  
**Mother and Child**

c. 1891-92  
 Oil on cardboard, 29 × 13 cm  
 Stamp 4, lower right  
 Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris, c. 1945 – Alfred Daber, Paris – Sale, Christie's, New York, 9 May 2000, lot 313 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *A blonde-haired woman standing partly undressed in a white shift and grey skirt against a grey and yellow background. (AC)*



II-116



II-117

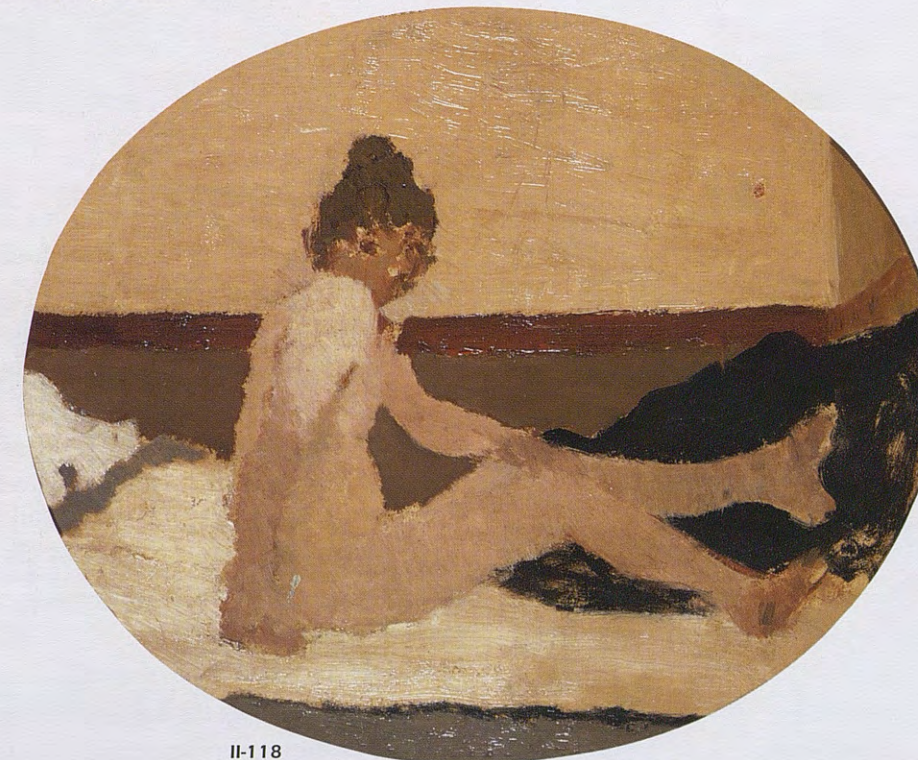
**II-117**  
**Young Model Brushing**  
**Her Hair**

c. 1891  
 Oil on cardboard, 10 × 18 cm  
 Stamp 4, upper right  
 Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Mrs John Hay Whitney Collection, New York – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, May 1957, no. 74 (ill.).

**Description:** *A pale-skinned young girl in a black corset, brushing her loose black hair. Wine-coloured patch to the right. (AC)*



II-118

**II-118**  
**Small Oval Nude**

c. 1891  
 Oil on cardboard, 23.5 × 28.5 cm, oval  
 Stamp 1, lower right  
 Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Baronne de Montesquiou-Fezensac, Neuilly-sur-Seine (France) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 30 June 1982, lot 26 (col. ill.) – Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.

**Exhibitions:** London, JPL, 1985, no. 4 (col. ill.) – Melbourne-Sydney, 1985, no. 31 (col. ill.) – Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 5 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, p. 37, no. 14 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *A woman, her face in shadow, stretching her legs on a yellow sheet and black blanket, against a uniform brown and yellow background. (AC)*

**II-119**  
**Naiad**

c. 1891  
 Pastel on paper, 47 × 31 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower right  
 Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris.



II-119



## II-120

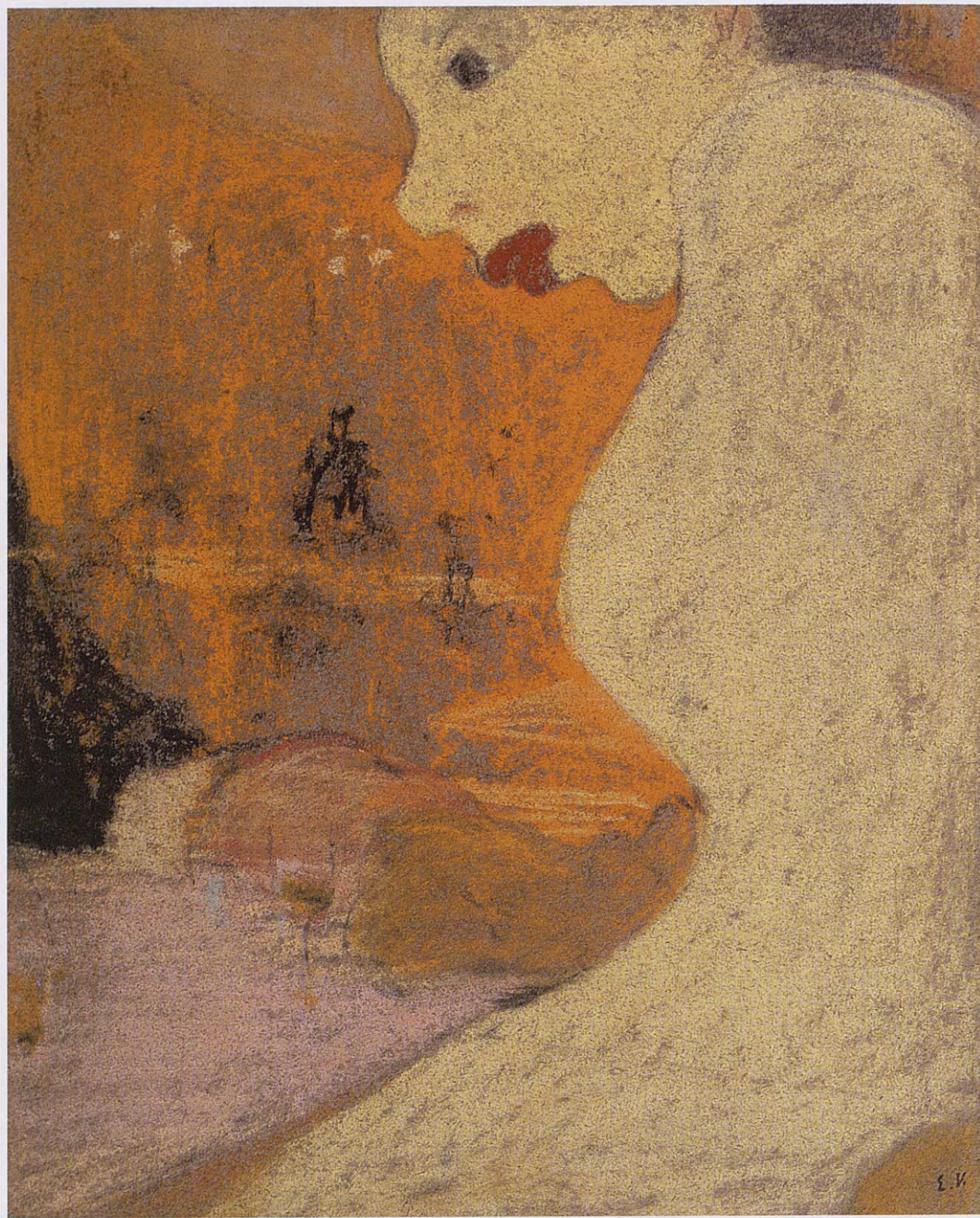
### The Flirt

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 24.5 x 20 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Description:** *The title is justified by the man's hand reaching out from a white shirt-cuff under a black sleeve to touch – or attempt to touch – on the pink marble table-top of the establishment the beige-gloved hand of the young lady silhouetted in pale pink, whose face breaks off at the line of the eyebrow. The background, where figures appear to be hopping about, is bright orange and is framed by the large, round, sand-coloured hat, the woman's profile (with its almost monstrous crimson mouth) and the curve of the bust. (AC)*

As in *At The 'Divan Japonais'*, the framing here is most unusual and reading the scene problematic. Against the hazy background of a café-concert, a man – of whom all we see is a large hand – makes a pass at the young lady who occupies two-thirds of the composition. Her chalky complexion seems a sort of caricature, a Vuillardian version of Baudelaire's taste for the 'enooormous'.<sup>1</sup> The monstrous red lips and wide eyes, combined with the comic detail of the enormous hand, seem to foreshadow (without any scientific intention, of course) William Penfield's *Sensorial homunculus*, a purportedly three-dimensional representation of the cortical mapping of our motor and tactile activities,



II-120

in which the size of the body organs corresponds to the relative area they occupy in the brain (see ill.). This original but monstrous image, dating from the middle of the twentieth century, was certainly not *foreseen* by Vuillard's work, especially as the painter never shared that taste for evil beings, for kobolds and ever-changing mandrakes, with which his friend Ranson populated his witches' sabbaths and cabalistic scenes. At the same time, the features of an 'exacerbated' physiognomy – eyes, mouth, hands – seem literally to burst out of the body in which they appear. A strange print by Utagawa Toyokuni II (1777-1835) which once

belonged to Vuillard (see ill.) offers a disturbing counterpart to *The Flirt*. It shows a Japanese actor dressed in women's clothes – the detail is significant – captured in an expressive dumb show (comparable to that of the young lady in *The Flirt*) as he converses with a man on the far right of the composition of whom we see only a bare leg and a hand holding a pipe. The spatial arrangements are very similar and in both cases are reinforced by a grotesquely exaggerated sexual atmosphere. The fact remains that the artist's ever-enquiring mind may have wished to depict, in an apparently everyday setting, the exac-



Utagawa Toyokuni II,  
*The Actor Segawa  
Kikunjo as Okiku,  
Lady at Court*,  
print, 35.4 x 24.5 cm.  
Private collection.

erbation of the outward signs of the body when dominated for a moment by an all-exclusive passion. As he himself notes: 'if I focus on one point only, losing sense of the other images of that body, I lose the relationship between that point and the others, [and] little by little it takes over the entire mind'.<sup>2</sup> All in all, this little-known painting should be classed among those very few works of Vuillard's to possess a strong sexual flavour. Much later, between 1927 and 1930, Picasso would in turn develop those monstrous deformations of the body found in such paintings as *Bathers* and *Sleeping Women*, in which every orifice (eyes, mouth, vagina) is placed on the same flat plane, transforming the female figure into a crude sex-machine capable of satisfying every conceivable appetite.

<sup>1</sup> In French, 'hénauorme', instead of 'énorme'.

<sup>2</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 20 Nov. 1888, I.1, fol. 12r.

## II-121

### The Demonstration

1890  
Pastel on paper, 48 x 61.5 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

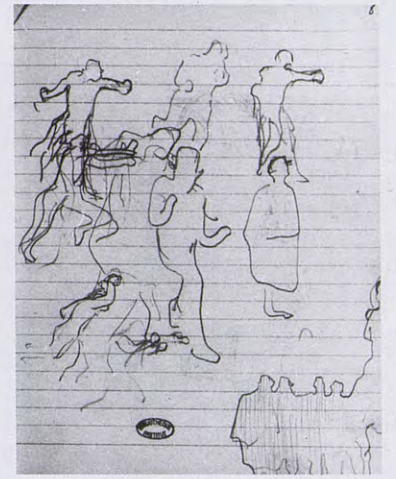
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 151bis [*Manifestation place de la Concorde*, 1892] – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 244 – London, Marlborough, 1954, no. 63 – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 205.

**Bibliography:** Eckert Boyer, exhib. cat., New Brunswick (New Jersey), 1988, p. 20, fig. 25 – Bernier 1991, p. 22 (ill.) – Cogeval 1993a, p. 8.

**Description:** *Deliberately exaggerated arabesques under a blue and white sky painted in flat tones. Yellow hatchings on the ground.*

This pastel drawing represents a foray into a genre in which Vuillard's friend Vallotton would later excel: political satire. Vuillard's *Journal* is littered with attacks on the bourgeoisie, and one page in particular (see ill.) prepares the way for this composition, with a group of policemen standing shoulder to shoulder on the Place de la Concorde and a second detachment beating up a group of demonstrators. There is also a second large study sheet with a brief sketch of the scene in red chalk. In the pastel drawing, Vuillard emphasises the viciousness of the police brutality, contrasting it with the surprise of the demonstrators, taken aback by the blows that rain down on them. A further contrast is provided by the Arcadian calm of the blue sky streaked with white clouds. The figures being beaten up by the police look more like members of the bourgeoisie than workers; indeed, a top-hat flies through the air. It is two different sides of the establishment that are coming to blows, therefore, much to the delight of Vuillard and his anarchist friends. The drawing probably depicts a demon-



E. V., *Journal*, I.2, fol. 8r.

stration of supporters of General Boulanger being broken up by the police (who were never more deserving of their popular nickname, 'cognes', or 'bruisers'). The page in Vuillard's *Journal* mentioned above dates from 1890, when the last throws of the Boulangist movement were in the process of being crushed by the Republic.



II-121



William Penfield, *Sensorial Homunculus*,  
three-dimensional photograph.  
Private collection.



## II-122

## The Pursuit

c. 1891  
Oil on canvas, 41 × 32.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, c. 1950 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Bibliography:** Perucchi-Petri 1976, p. 120, fig. 76.

**Description:** *A woman wearing a bonnet and a green dress is caught in a yellow light which outlines her from behind as she runs twisting through an orange and red meadow flecked with green. A pure blue sky adds an unusual touch to the scene. (AC)*

The manner in which the woman's fear is expressed is almost Grand-Guignolesque; the *japonisant* sway of the hips, noted by Ursula Perucchi-Petri, and the violence of the colour combinations, particularly the green and orange, make this one of the most experimental works of the early 1890s. The violence of the theme is in Vuillard's Sadian vein, already noted in *The Bois de Boulogne* (II-45), and foreshadows the kind of scene depicted in his frontispiece to Maurice Beaubourg's *L'Image*, in which a Symbolist writer, obsessed by the image of feminine perfection, ends up strangling the woman he loves (see ill.). One might also recall Degas' juicy remark, quoted in



E. V., *Une nuit d'Avril à Ceos, L'Image*, Programme of the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, February 1894, lithograph, 31 x 23 cm. Private collection.



II-122

## II-123

## In Bed

1891  
Oil on canvas, 73 × 92.5 cm  
Signed and dated, upper left: *e. vuillard 91*  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1977-374

**Provenance:** Artist's studio; M. et Mme Kerr-Xavier Roussel, L'Étang-la-Ville (France); gift from Roussel to the French nation in 1941; deposited with the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; allocated to the Musée du Louvre (Palais de Tokyo), Paris, 1977; transferred to Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 1986.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Orangerie, 1941-42, no. 18 – Paris, Musées Nationaux, 1945, no. 280 – Liège-Ghent-Luxembourg, 1948, no. 18 (ill.) – Amsterdam-Brussels, 1952, no. 96 (ill.) – New York, 1954, p. 100 (ill.) – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1960-61, no. 733 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 7 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 7 (ill.) – Paris, 1993-94, no. 146 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Dorival 1943, p. 123 – Chastel 1946, pp. 14 (ill.), 44 – Dorival 1946, p. 39, fig. 24 – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 37 (ill.), 49 – Thirion 1947, pp. 146-148 (col. ill.) – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne 1947, p. 14, no. 34 (ill.) – Mercanton 1949, col. pl. 2 – Schweicher 1949, p. 107 – Roger-Marx 1954a, p. 323 (col. ill.) – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne 1954, p. 163 – Hermann 1959, pl. 9 – Dorival 1961, pp. 28,



II-123

94 (col. ill.) – Salomon 1961, p. 27 (ill.) – Mauner 1963-64, pp. 101-102, fig. 11 – Cabanne 1964, pp. 83, 85 (ill.) – Jalard 1966, pp. 43 (col. ill.), 61 – Platte 1967, pp. 131 (ill.), 139 – Salomon 1968, p. 45 (ill.) – Alexandrian 1969, pp. 131 (ill.), 141 – Preston 1971, fig. 7 – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, p. 22 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 98-102, col. fig. 56 – Dorival 1977, p. 67, col. fig. 67 – Jalard 1977, p. 201 (col. ill.) – Mauner 1978, pp. 200, 229-230, 233, 255, fig. 80 – Terrasse 1980, p. 124, col. pl. 26 – Georges 1982, pp. 41, 60 – Daniel 1984, pp. 115, 391, ills. 35, 143 – Warnod 1988, p. 21 – Makarius 1989, pp. 10, 12 (ill.) – Rosenblum 1989, p. 606 (col. ill.) – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, pp. 147, 149 (ill.) – Ferrier 1991, p. 850 (col. ill.) – Berger 1992, pp. 222-223, fig. 159 – Boyle-Turner 1993, pp. 30, 31 (col. ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 31-32 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *The knees of the sleeping woman make a hump in the sheets, which, like the pillows, are treat-*

*ed geometrically in dull greys and ochres and outlined with strongly marked shadows. The background is in two shades of blue-green and is paler towards the top. To the right is the brown 'T' of a cross. (JS)*

Makarius has spoken memorably of 'the sleep of pale colours', and Chastel, while paying tribute 'to the appearance of *cloisonné* enamels, of softened stained-glass windows', alludes to the 'curious painting of a young woman asleep', underlining the sexual ambiguity of the young sleeper. *In Bed* is Little Nemo as Maeterlinck might have portrayed him. Sleep is the preferred stalking-ground of Symbolism, with its propensity to dream, and the bed is its nodal point. But here we touch on that morbid attraction for the viscosities of sickness, 'the old maid-

servant of death', peculiar to the twists and turns of Symbolist theatre, particularly that of Maeterlinck. We all know that this fascination with sickness – that slow descent into death – in decadent *fin-de-siècle* culture derived largely from Edgar Allen Poe; we need only recall the character of Lady Madeleine in 'The Fall of the House of Usher', buried alive like one of the living dead, who gave rise to so many Pre-Raphaelite and 'Debussyist' works between 1880 and 1890.

Everything that needs to be said about the geometric mapping of the picture-space has been said before and, in the case of Ursula Perucchi-Petri, has been said particularly well: 'In the [picture's] rigorously lateral view, the parallelism of the strip of floor-

<sup>1</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 48.



board, the edge of the bed and the upper border, combined with the succession of vertical selvages on the cushions and folds of drapery, locks the bed into a strict grid-work of horizontals and verticals. Within this geometric framework, the arabesques traced by the contours of the cushions and drapery are animated by a free rhythm.<sup>2</sup> Particularly striking is the contradiction between the strongly defined flat colours and the shadows cast by the sheets and blankets, creating an illusion of depth. Even more than that of Japanese graphic art, the precedent of Puvis de Chavannes must have weighed heavily on the painting: one has to look back to the latter's *Young Women by the Sea*<sup>3</sup> or to *The Poor Fisherman*<sup>4</sup> noted by Vuillard in his Journal<sup>5</sup> to find a comparable coming-together of smooth, flat fields of colour, indications of a mystic discourse. The handling of the tricks and sleights of vision is masterly: is the cross covered by a drape forming a canopy or are these parallel bands arbitrary, as they appear to be in *The Stevedores* (II-7), painted one year earlier? It is here that the signature floating near the top of the painting takes on meaning, like a superimposed transparency or stray watermark, one possible incrustation of reality combining with the others, yet without any real depth of field emerging from it all. As always, experimental slippages that might appear pedantic or provocative are redeemed by a unified sense of the work's *climate*, the hothouse atmosphere in which the girl's body is denied by what is to all intents and purposes a winding-sheet. The death-bed atmosphere, the suggestion of childhood threatened by death – themes pervasive in the works of visionary artists



Andres Serrano, *Fatal Meningitis, II*, 1995, photograph. Private collection.

such as Hodler, Pellizza da Volpedo, Munch and, above all, Mahler – numb the senses. The moderation of the monochrome tints, their 'sound-proofing', strikes a particularly modern chord: how can we fail to think of the dead adolescents photographed by Andres Serrano (see ill.), their faces framed by the plastic body-bags of the morgue? That we are looking at a portrait of Marie seems unlikely: she was thirty at the time, and we must resign ourselves to the fact that Vuillard *never* sees her as a child.

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Act IV, scene 2.

<sup>2</sup> Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 309.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, *Young Women by the Sea*, 1879, oil on canvas, 205 × 154 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, *The Poor Fisherman*, 1881, oil on canvas, 155.5 × 192.5 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

<sup>5</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 13v.

## II-124 Sleep

1892

Oil on canvas, 33 × 64.5 cm

Signed, upper left: *ev* and lower right:

*E. Vuillard*

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1977-374

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by the Réunion des Musées Nationaux for the Musée du Luxembourg, Paris, 14 Dec. 1936 for 4,000 F; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; allocated to the Musée du Louvre (Palais de Tokyo), Paris, 1977; transferred to Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 1986.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, 1892, no. 182 [*Femme couchée*] – Toulouse (France), Salons de La Dépêche, 1894, no. 89 – France, travelling exhib. [Peintures du Musée d'Art Moderne], 1945-46, no. 13 – Liège-Ghent-Luxembourg, 1948, no. 19 – Vienna, Institut Français, 1949, no. 46 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 162 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1953, p. 12, fig. 2 – Besançon (France), Palais Granvelle, 1956, no. 46 (ill.) – France, travelling exhib., 1956, no. 6 (ill.) – Cardiff, National Museum of Wales, 1957, no. 78 – London, R.B.A. Galleries, 1957, no. 20 – Marseilles, Cantini, 1957, no. 59 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 8 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 8 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1942, p. 6 – Cassou, Dorival and Homolle 1947, p. 14, no. 35; and 1954, p. 163 – *Le Spectacle du monde*, no. 78, Sept. 1968, p. 107 (ill.) – Daniel 1984, p. 115, fig. 36 – Thomson 1988, pp. 28, 84, col. pl. 12 – Warnod 1988, p. 18 (col. ill.) – Makarius 1989, pp. 14-15 (col. ill.) – Rosenblum 1989, p. 606 (col. ill.) – Thomson, exhib. cat., London and Paris, 1991-92, p. 430, fig. 519 – Forgione 1992, p. 143, fig. 71 – Ellridge 1993, pp. 92-93 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *A woman asleep on a trestle bed. The blankets and sheets are treated geometrically in olive-green tints. At the foot of the bed are a pair of slippers and, on a chair, a few triangular patches of clothing (white above, dark red below). The painting is predominantly brown, and the bare canvas ground is used to outline the forms.* (JS)

A year after painting his celebrated *In Bed* (II-123), Vuillard presented this more experimental work at the 'Troisième Exposition de Peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes' at Le Barc de Bouteville's gallery in November 1892, under the title *Woman in Bed*. A champion of avant-garde art, Le Barc de Bouteville offered the use of his gallery in the



II-124



Cartoon published in *Le Journal* of 31 December 1892.

rue Le Pelletier in Paris to propagate Nabi painting on a number of occasions up until 1896. Albert Aurier had greeted his efforts in *Le Mercure de France*: 'To have deliberately offered these innovative young artists, still contested by the critics and looked down upon by buyers, and in general scoffed at by dealers and selection committees, a permanent refuge in which they can expose to public judgement, without fear of the ignominies of overcrowding, the results of their labours and research, is assuredly a fine and generous idea'.<sup>1</sup> The differences with *In Bed* (II-123) are immediately apparent; there are, on the other hand, strong affinities with *Madame Vuillard asleep* (II-126). A satirical article which appeared in *Le Journal* on 31 December 1892 (see ill.) lam-

pooned a number of paintings by Ranson, Denis, Bonnard and Vuillard, including the present work, which, under the acid pen of Yvanhoé Rambosson, became '*Sleeping woman in pieces*', an unintentional tribute to the *cloisonniste* qualities of *Sleep*. In an unpublished letter of 12 November 1892, Vuillard's childhood friend, the painter Marc Mouclier, informs him that he has finished the hanging at Le Barc de Bouteville's gallery. 'We went to Bouteville's yesterday, where we put up a few small canvases. It's very hard to know what to do on such occasions. Your painting of a sleeping woman with a [splash of] red is placed right at the very top and seems so well-made that it squashes slightly everything around it... In a word, we are all crowded into the panel on the left as you go in: the space we had available was very small, seeing that Bouteville has hundreds of metres of paintings to fit in. / Since you're off, have a good trip... but write to me with some of your impressions: it would give me pleasure. / Your devoted friend, Marc Mouclier. / Bonnard will deal with the exhibition and may make some changes... My regards to our friend Roussel 12 November 1892.'<sup>2</sup> *Sleep* continues in the mode of piecing

together subdued, complementary tones which conjure up the drowsiness of sleep. Only a small fold of crimson fabric over the armchair adds a slightly strident note to the monochrome torpor of the whole.

<sup>1</sup> Aurier 1892b, p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Marc Mouclier to É. V., 12 Nov. 1892, doc. 18, Salomon archives.





II-125

## II-125 Sleeping Woman

1892

Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 26.8 × 26.8 cm

Signed, lower left: *ev*

Inscribed on rear: 92

Private collection, Washington D.C.

**Provenance:** Alexandre Natanson, Paris – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 111 [*La Femme endormie*] (ill.) – Jos Hessel, Paris, 43,100 F – Georges Bénard, Paris – Private collection, Washington D.C.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 42 [*Dormeuse*].

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 44, p. 11 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 37 (ill.) – Schweicher 1949, p. 107.

The face of Marie sleeping is clearly recognisable, albeit in sublimated, Synthetist form. Vuillard has here abandoned the caricatured style which he used to such good effect in the 1891 portrait. For all that, the beige and brown monochrome effects, along with the severely restricted palette of heavily outlined tones, are reminiscent of the *Portrait of Lugné-Poe* (III-25), painted the previous year. Less dogmatic than a *cloisonniste* painting by Émile Bernard, this homage to Vuillard's sister communicates a feeling of blissful calm.

## II-126

### Madame Vuillard Asleep

c. 1891-92

Oil on canvas, 24 × 32.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Artist's studio; collection of Kerr-Xavier Roussel, Paris – Gift from Roussel to Jacques Beltrand, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 18 March 1964, lot 64 (ill.) – Private collection, France.

This scene was sketched in more detail in a charcoal drawing (see ill.) in which we recognise the artist's mother, asleep. Vuillard has no qualms about observing his



E. V., sketch for *Madame Vuillard Asleep*, c. 1891-92, charcoal on paper, 23.9 × 31.5 cm. Private collection.



II-126

mother's private life, even to the point of peering into her bedroom, if a work of art is to be the result (see IV-160). This painting should be seen in conjunction with the many pictures Vuillard made of sleeping women between 1891 and 1892.



II-127

## II-127

### Woman in Bed

c. 1891

Oil on cardboard, 12.5 × 19.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 2000-29

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hector Brame, Paris – Otto Wertheimer, Paris, 1949 – Ortiz de Chagoué – Private collection – Anonymous gift with right of usufruct to Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Orsay, 2000, no. 23 (col. ill.).





II-128

## II-128 The Large Napkin

c. 1891-92  
Oil on canvas, 28 × 23.2 cm, oval  
Stamp 1, lower centre  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Private collection, London, 1957 – Sale, Christie's, London, 26 June 1995, lot 2 (col. ill.) – Galerie Berès and Galerie Hopkins-Thomas, Paris – William Kelly Simpson, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Berès, May 1957, no. 72 [*La Grande Serviette*, c. 1896] – London, Tooth & Sons, Nov.-Dec. 1957, no. 5 (ill.); and April-May 1969, no. 22 (ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 11, pp. 85 (col. ill.), 171.

**Description:** Next to a window, a woman in a brown dress, seated before a table with a plate on it, raises a napkin to her mouth. Grey-green palette. Flat colours. (AC)

## II-129 Marie Seen in Profile

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 21 × 16 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 11 – Paris, Berès, May 1957, no. 66 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 25 – Munich, Kunstverein, 1959, no. 32 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 20 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 7 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 15 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Mauner 1978, fig. 77.

**Description:** The silhouette of a woman dressed in black forms a sober arabesque that stands out sharply against the white-lead background, while her pale face affords a more muted contrast of tones. (AC)



II-129

## II-130 The Little Delivery-Boy

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 40 × 26 cm  
Inscribed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris – Galerie Georges Moos, Geneva – Paul Vogel, Geneva – Wildenstein, New York – Collection of Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon, Upperville (Virginia), 1969 – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** London, Tooth & Sons, 1934, no. 18 – Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 70 [*L'Écolier*] – London, Rosenberg & Helft, 1937, no. 18 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 18 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 79 – Lausanne, Palais de Beaulieu, 1964, no. 153 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** George 1938a, p. 28 (ill.) – Chastel 1946, p. 19 (ill.) – *GBA* 29, June 1946, p. 365 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 35 (ill.), 49 – Roger-Marx 1948c, pl. 3 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 59, 91-92, 102 – *CdA*, no. 147, May 1964, p. 93 (ill.) – *Art News* 63, no. 5, Sept. 1964, p. 23 (ill.) – *Jardin des arts*, no. 161, April 1968, p. 76 (ill.) – *Réalités*, no. 269, June 1968, p. 61 (col. ill.) – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 18, col. pl. 2 – Salomon 1968, pp. 51, 52 (ill.) – Clay 1971, p. 218 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 155 – Groom 1993, p. 215, no. 45.

**Description:** A brightly lit small boy framed by the dark doorway through which he is passing with a piece of light-coloured fabric folded over his arm. (JS)

Once again, a doorway creates what Claude Roger-Marx<sup>1</sup> aptly describes as 'different light environments'. The main focus of the painting, however, is the innocence of the little boy, in his schoolboy's smock, caught in the midst of his daily task, as though the Nabi painter wished to provide a counterpoint to Manet's celebrated *Child with a Sword*.<sup>2</sup> Vuillard excels in depicting that moment in a child's life when he is poised miraculously between the two sexes.

<sup>1</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Édouard Manet, *Child with a Sword*, 1861, oil on canvas, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



II-130



## II-131

### The Half-Open Door

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard, 21 × 16.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts,  
Minneapolis (Minnesota), The Margaret  
G. Deal Fund in honour of Gertrude  
C. Deal, Harrison H. Deal, and Mary  
Deal Selcer, Acc. No. 96.41

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier,  
Paris – O'Hana, London, c. 1955 – Ellen Jose-  
fowitz, London – Mr Gill; Mrs Marjorie Gill –  
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1996.

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, pp. 44, 61.

**Description:** A woman in grey, leaning forward as  
she opens a door, stands out sharply against a bright  
chrome-yellow background. The wall is ochre. The  
item of furniture on the left is red, the chair on the  
right ochre. (AC)



E. V., sketch for  
*L'Enfant prodigue*  
(*The Prodigal Son*),  
graphite, pen,  
brush and ink  
on paper,  
13.6 × 10.7 cm.  
Private collection.



II-131

## II-132

### Marie Playing with Her Dog

1891  
Pastel on paper, 23 × 14 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 91*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Otto Wertheimer,  
Paris – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 10 Nov. 1962,  
lot 272 (ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 16 April  
1970, lot. 54 (ill.) – Waddington, London – Cur-  
rent whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Berlin, Haus am Waldsee, 1965,  
no. 50.



II-132

The anonymous figure looms into view,  
introducing a flash of incandescent yellow  
light into an otherwise rather lack-lustre  
ensemble. That Vuillard has applied the  
principles of stage-lighting to everyday life  
would seem to be borne out by an India ink  
drawing made around the same time (see  
ill.), depicting a figure (see III-35, the Pier-  
rot in *The Prodigal Son*) seen from the back  
and partly framed by an open door like a  
character from the *Commedia dell'arte*. The  
frontier between painting, decoration,  
stage-design and illustration is still very  
porous in the young Vuillard's work.

## II-133

### Marie in a Blue and Red Blouse

1891  
Pastel on paper mounted on cardboard,  
26.5 × 13 cm  
Signed and dated, upper left: *ev / 91*  
Private collection, Paris

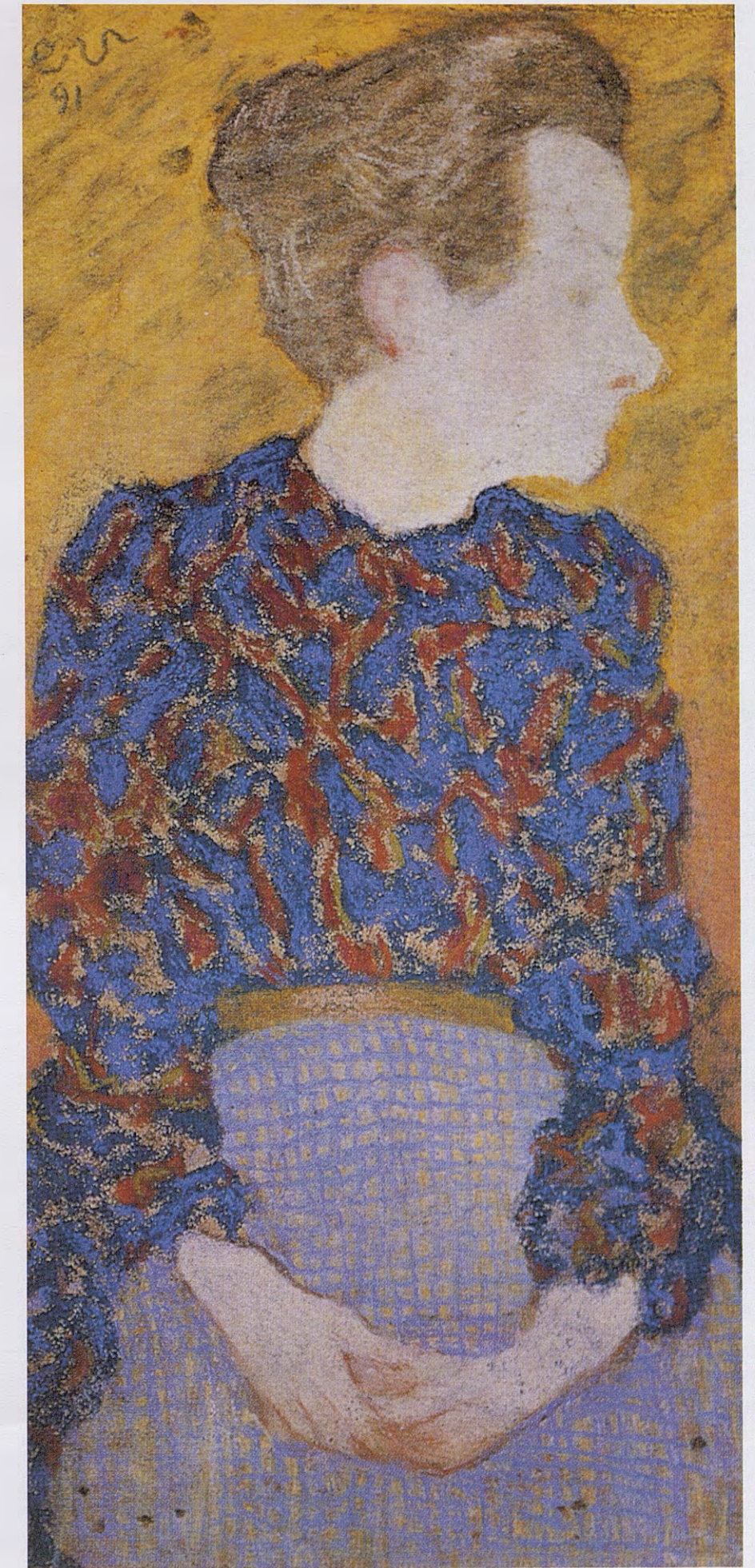
**Provenance:** Marcelle Lender, Paris – Antonio San-  
tamarina, Buenos Aires – Mme Lucy Escobar de  
Santamarina, New Canaan (Connecticut) – Sale,  
Sotheby's, London, 2 April 1974, lot 29 –  
Mrs William Wood – Private collection, Paris.

**Bibliography:** Santamarina 1965, pp. 182 (col.  
ill.), 183.

The strange pallor of the face and the mod-  
esty of the pose make this portrait of Marie  
comparable to the pictures of peasant  
women painted by Jules Breton or Raffael-  
li. In sketches of this kind, we notice that  
Vuillard sees his sister as a maternal figure.  
There is a drawing in the Vuillard archives,  
moreover, in which he sketches his sister read-  
ing by a window in the countryside (see ill.).  
They were probably staying at *Tante Saurel's*  
home in Créteil, and Marie, in this detailed  
sketch, is starting to look like her mother.



E. V., *Portrait of the Artist's Sister in the Country*,  
c. 1890-91, graphite on paper, 12 × 15.9 cm.  
Private collection.



II-133





II-134

## II-134 The Passer-by

c. 1890-91  
Oil on cardboard, 18 × 14 cm  
Signed, lower left: *ev*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Galerie Le Niveau, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 26903), 26 June 1937 – Georges Lévy, Paris, 29 July 1937 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A young woman wearing light-coloured clothes and a hat is walking with her torso thrown forward towards the left of the painting. Set into the dark background is a door. (JS)

## II-135 The Lady of Fashion

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 28.4 × 15.3 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

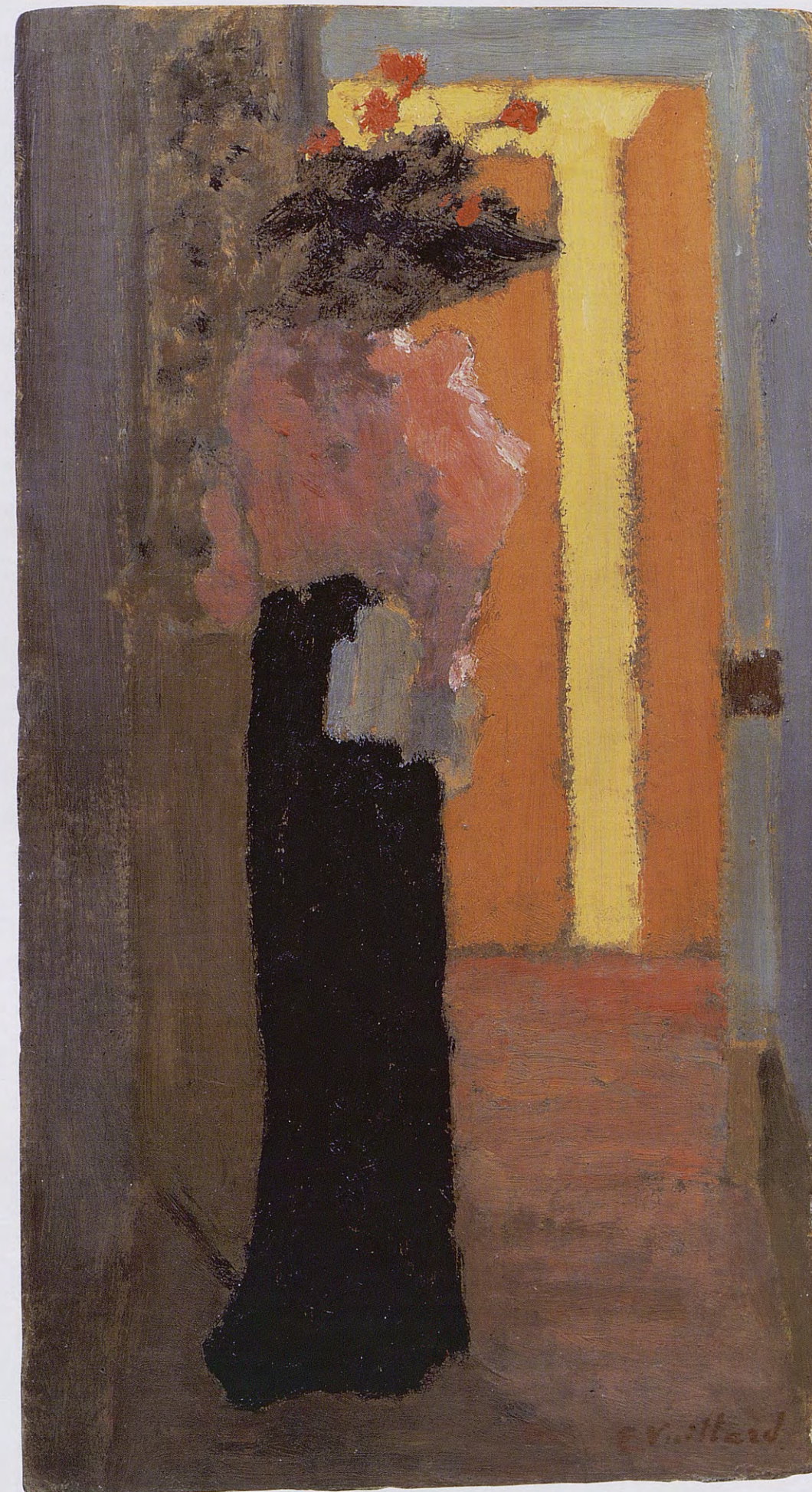
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1953, no. 32 [*La Femme en rose*] – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 183 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 13 (ill.) – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1960-61, no. 735 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 9 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 30 (ill.) – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 8 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 153 (col. ill.) – Florence, 1998, no. 10, p. 49 (col. ill.); and Montreal, 1998, no. 170, p. 28 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 16 – Chastel 1948, col. pl. 1 – *La Critica d'arte*, no. 1, 1 May 1949, p. 83 (ill.), fig. 64 – Chastel 1954, p. 40 (col. ill.) – Dorival 1957, p. 21 – *Emporium* 131, no. 782, Feb. 1960, p. 55 (ill.) – Mauner 1963-64, p. 103 – *Réalités*, no. 269, June 1968, p. 65 (col. ill.) – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 16 – *Paris Match* 1976, p. 121 (col. ill.) – Perucchi-Petri 1976, p. 106, fig. 62 – Mauner 1978, pp. 227-229, fig. 78 – Georges 1982, pp. 52, 167 – Daniel 1984, fig. 14 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, pp. 77 (col. ill.), 78 (ill.) – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 19 (ill.) – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, pp. 151, 153 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A lady in a black skirt, pink blouse and a hat decorated with poppies standing in a red-carpeted corridor. The end of the corridor is lit by an open, orange-yellow door. (JS)

Few subjects can be quite so banal as passing from one room to another, yet Vuillard always manages to turn it into a rite, the mysteries of which it is up to us to unravel. Here, an *élégante* or fashionably dressed young lady – who, judging by her tubular skirt, corseted pink blouse, and her hat decked out with tentacle-like flowers, was probably a client of Mme Vuillard's dress-making studio – is about to enter a room the light from which determines the geometry of the picture space. It is from this bright yellow seam of light, shaped like a Greek *tau* or 'T', that the light of the painting derives,<sup>1</sup> without our being able to establish quite what its purpose is. It seems designed



II-135

to echo the stylised feminine form, which, as so often in Vuillard's work, is seen from the back and appears to be waiting for something. What we are witnessing, we feel, is not so much a 'passage' as a *revelation*. In Vuillard's work, the act of passing through a door heralds new arrangements of space and colour, new light settings, and functions like the parting of curtains in traditional religious painting: one need only recall the theatrical use of space in Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* and in all those transfers and recyclings in Ingres. The body becomes an image or symbol by virtue of being displayed. This sense of transition of a figure in space is one that Matisse would remember.

Further light can be thrown on this Synthesist figure of elegance by viewing it alongside Fauvist equivalents in the work of Dufy and Marquet. More disturbing still is its similarity to a work even more remote in time, August Macke's *The Hatter* (see ill.). Yet how



August Macke, *The Hatter*, 1913, oil on canvas. Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich.

can the air of doubt, the still mystery surrounding the Nabi painting, be compared with the somewhat literal rendering of the German Expressionist?

<sup>1</sup> Mauner 1978, p. 228.



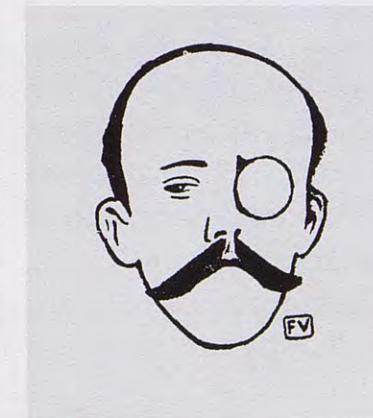
### III – In the Glow of the Footlights (1890-1900)

*There have to be laws more powerful than those  
of our souls, about which we talk so incessantly.*

Maurice Maeterlinck, *Aladine et Palomides*

Early in the 1890s a theatrical reform movement got under way in France that was to have a profound impact on the future. Affecting every aspect of theatre from set design to directing style, the new approach coincided with revolutionary trends that had begun shaking the Paris art world at the end of the previous decade: Chromoluminarism, Cloisonnism, Synthetism – and Nabism. The concordance between these various movements was quite astonishing. Like their painter counterparts, the theatrical reformers were all young, aged between twenty and twenty-five. They included Lugné-Poe, Paul Fort, Pierre Quillard, Maurice Maeterlinck (see ill.) and Camille Mauclair – all men of Vuillard's generation. Youth and temperament impelled them to provoke audiences and critics alike. Émile Zola (with his theory of the 'fourth wall') and Antoine soon became idols to be toppled.<sup>1</sup> The encounter between the realms of theatre and painting, which had hitherto exhibited a profound mutual indifference, was little short of miraculous and virtually without precedent. One exception was Jacques-Louis David, who had been fascinated by theatrical scenery during the 1780s, also offering ideas to the Comédie Française and designing costumes for his actor friend Joseph Talma. Later, around 1830, the generation of Paul Delaroche and Eugène Delacroix was closely linked to the romantic theatre, particularly that of Alexandre Dumas and Schiller, sometimes even appropriating theatrical subjects: one of Delaroche's most famous paintings, *Les Enfants d'Édouard*, portrays a scene from a play of the same name by Casimir Delavigne, now totally forgotten but in those days one of the leading figures of romantic theatre.

The goal of the theatrical revolutionaries of 1890-91 was an aesthetic of the 'unsaid', the 'almost nothing' – of equal appeal to Mallarmé the poet and Maeterlinck the play-



Félix Vallotton, *Henri de Régnier*, print, in *Livre des Masques* by Rémi de Gourmont, Paris 1914.



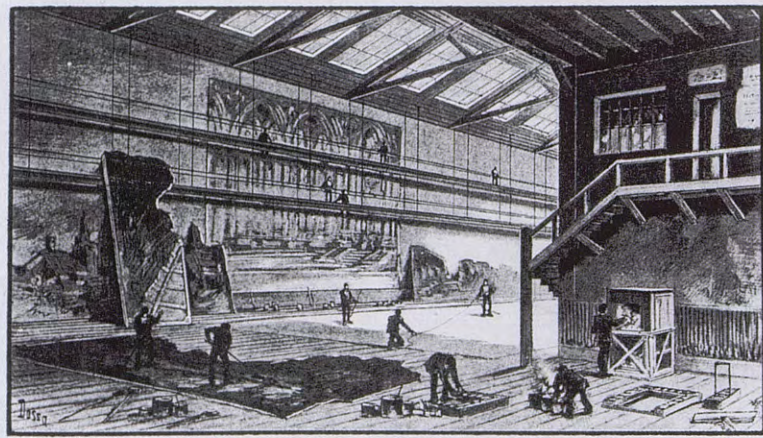
Félix Vallotton, *Maurice Maeterlinck*, print, in *Livre des Masques* by Rémi de Gourmont, Paris 1914.

wright. In an article published in *La Jeune Belgique* in 1890, the latter, whose plays operated on the level of dream and suggestion, offered some fascinating reflections on the paradox of the actor: 'Something of Hamlet died for us when we saw him die onstage. He then was diminished by the spectre of an actor, and we can no longer disregard this usurper of our dreams. The presentation of a masterpiece that includes accidental and human elements is antinomic. Every masterpiece is a symbol and symbols cannot tolerate the presence of man ... the absence of man seems to me indispensable.'<sup>2</sup> Maeterlinck thus favoured either an inspired reading of the text or the replacement of humans by puppets.



Félix Vallotton, *Pierre Quillard*, print, in *Livre des Masques* by Rémi de Gourmont, Paris 1914.





A theatre set-designer's studio, print, in *Trucs et Décors* by Georges Moynet, 1888, reprint, Geneva, 1973.

The idealist, symbolist generation believed that things should not be *designated*;<sup>3</sup> it was a generation weighed down by the burden of fate, which casts its shadow over all human ventures. And Maeterlinck, shy visionary, creator of crazed beings and nebulous haunts, was their universally venerated prince. After simply reading *La Princesse Maleine*, Octave Mirbeau, one of his earliest admirers, declared it to be 'the most brilliant work of our time, and the most extraordinary and the most naïve too, comparable and – dare I say it – superior in beauty to the most beautiful Shakespeare'.<sup>4</sup> In March 1891 Paul Fort's Théâtre d'Art troupe mounted a production of *La Fille aux mains coupées*, a play in two 'heraldic' tableaux by Pierre Quillard, whose aim was not to recreate a medieval Mystery Play but rather to conjure a stiff, hieratic atmosphere, shaped by only the vaguest of stage directions: 'The action takes place anywhere, and more or less in the Middle Ages.' The sets were by Sérusier. *La*



E. V., Project for the Théâtre-Libre, 1891, pencil, watercolour and wash on paper, 17.4 x 24.5 cm. Private collection.

*Fille aux mains coupées*, with its distanced aesthetic, became in a way the manifesto of the period: chanted phrases, slow gestures, symbol-characters; gauze screens half separating the actors from the narrator, who stood stiffly at the edge of the stage; the same backdrop for each scene, with obsessively repeated medieval motifs against a gold ground. In every respect, an ambience of Pre-Raphaelite rapture. Quillard, replying a short while later to Pierre Veber's criticisms in *La Revue d'Art Dramatique*, seized the opportunity to attack the principles behind the Théâtre-Libre. 'Nowhere has the futility of naturalism been revealed more clearly than in the theatre. Take the extravagances of the Théâtre-Libre [see ill.]. We have seen Monsieur Antoine die time and time again with consummate art – I use the word for want of a better; ladies and gentlemen, tarts and pimps have within its confines conducted the most banal conversations and uttered the most vulgar remarks, "just like in real life"; ... To create a total illusion of life, it was considered clever to devise sets of the most meticulous accuracy, with real fountains flowing in the middle of the stage and meat bloodying the butcher's block.'<sup>5</sup> Here the sometimes rather naïve principles of naturalism – which reigned supreme over the French theatre for many years, as they did later, with Chekhov, over the Russian – are completely shattered. Pierre Quillard continued, moreover, with the words that in retrospect have taken on the same kind of aura as Maurice Denis's 'definition of neo-traditionism': 'The word creates the scenery as it does the rest ... The set should be an entirely fictional decoration that completes the illusion through analogies with the drama of colour and line.'<sup>6</sup> Like the Symbolist painting that was gaining ground in Europe, idealist theatre was conceived as 'an excuse to dream'.<sup>7</sup> The Nabi group, who had begun developing projects since early in the previous year, saw it as an ideal opportunity to express their predilection for joint ventures and their aspirations regarding artistic coalescence. '[Sérusier] seized the chance with Lugné and the Théâtre d'Art to satisfy an adolescent passion for stage direction. Interminable discussions around café tables: wonderful plans for revolutionizing the theatre; sackcloth drops painted on the stage; the delight of inexpensively improvised performances; unexpected happenings at dress rehearsals; and the amusing surprise of the reaction of a public who were submissive, scandalized, never indifferent.'<sup>8</sup>

In this mood of ecstatic camaraderie, the Nabis presented Maeterlinck's *Les Sept Princesses* at the residence of a senior

member of the Conseil d'État Coulon, in Passy. In accordance with the Belgian playwright's desire for abstraction and the tastes of the time, the actors were all puppets; Denis and Lacombe modelled the wax heads, and Vuillard's sister Marie made the costumes.<sup>9</sup> 'Everyone was astonished that with such limited means we were able to achieve such a touching dramatic effect', recalled Verkade.<sup>10</sup> Their next production was the medieval *Farce du pâté*, for which Vuillard painted a fifteenth-century Paris street in the snow, on wrapping paper. This preference for marionettes and doll theatre would re-emerge later in the fashion for replacing the actor by a machine-man, stiff and pathetic – an idea defended in the theories of the Soviet and Italian theatre of the 1920s (Popova, Meyerhold, Prampolini, Balla). Vuillard played a major role in this fruitful crossover between scenography and painting; indeed, few artists of the period became as involved as he in the creation of theatrical scenery – a fact that Lugné-Poe was the first to recognize: 'The one who from the outset showed the most interest in the theatre and proved the best general adviser was Édouard Vuillard.'<sup>11</sup> It may be that the teamwork required for set design actually helped bring this shy, rather solitary young man out of his shell. He adored intellectual theatre – the sophisticated constructions of Ibsen and Maeterlinck – but his nighttime wanderings also took him to the Divan Japonais and to café-concerts, and prompted him to dream, like Mallarmé, of Loie Fuller's luminous choreographies; he attended Émile Reynaud's *pantomimes optiques* and became one of the many artists who were regulars at the Chat Noir. He drew inspiration from it all. Yvette Guilbert would be as important to Vuillard as to Toulouse-Lautrec, and few works portraying her possess the immediate, disconcerting power of *At the Divan Japonais* (III-5), whose framing is more radical than anything else being done at the time. Vuillard was also much impressed by the mime of the actress and singer Félicia Mallet in *L'Enfant prodigue* (see ill.). The play's plot resembled that of an eighteenth-century Italian comedy, but the visual effect onstage must have been very different: the mask worn by Mallet was an ambiguous mix of male and female; her misfortune, her loneliness, her invocations to the Moon no doubt amazed Vuillard, who – like many young artists of the period – suffered the pangs of angst. The artist executed many drawings based on *L'Enfant prodigue* in the short period when he was making programme designs for Antoine, which represent essential steps in his non-quest for a *theory*. In October 1890 he expressed



E. V., Project for Frontispiece for Félicia Mallet in *L'Enfant prodigue* (The Prodigal Son), 1890-91, graphite, ink and gouache on vellum paper, 30.5 x 21 cm. Private collection.

his position in his Journal: 'I've always worked at random and surely they are not works purely, it is not my work only, because of this randomness: the sketches on the conserva-



E. V., *Le Concours de Déclamation au Conservatoire*, 1891, brush, ink and watercolour, 34 x 29 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



tory [see ill.], the programmes for the T.L. [Théâtre-Libre], the pantomime drawings if they have a personality it is in spite of myself and I do everything to kill it through lack of intelligence because there is nothing absolute in our theories, it's a blessing. But why my confusion each time I start another series: lack of a firmly established theory that frees me from a vulgar concern with originality. Only a nicely established theory can give me peace of mind and allow me to develop. - Clearly, Sérusier is right to say that we should not worry about subjective expression when producing. That is the business of the contemplator.<sup>12</sup>

The theatre also enabled Vuillard to overcome his youthful complexes, both sexual and social, for in the Paris of the early 1890s he was surrounded by artists who were charming, flamboyant and articulate and, more significant, from bourgeois backgrounds. Modest, but nonetheless ambitious, Vuillard was determined to make his way in this milieu and to have his exceptional talent recognized. But he always made time to attend performances at the Comédie-Française. He struck up an admiring acquaintance with the actor Coquelin Cadet, who, at Lugné-Poe's insistence, purchased several small oil sketches from the Nabi group's young members, including Vuillard. Moreover, the artist made an extraordinary series of watercolours - executed in the Japanese style, with daringly unusual framings - that caricature Coquelin Cadet (see ill.) in several of the roles he played between 1890 and 1892, including Scapin and the Imaginary Invalid.



E. V., Coquelin Cadet in Five Different Roles in *Le Mercure Galant* by Boursault, 1892, brush and watercolour on paper, 15 x 37.5 cm. Private collection.



E. V., Sketch for *L'Intruse* by Maeterlinck, 1891, Indian ink, 27.5 x 51.5 cm. Private collection.

Vuillard's first major theatrical experience was with Maeterlinck's *L'Intruse* (see ill.), which Lugné-Poe mounted with the Théâtre d'Art troupe in May 1891. They collaborated on the sets and lighting, and the painter no doubt contributed towards certain aspects of the stage direction, especially the lighting effects designed to instil a sense of terror. The production, in which the actors' movements were hesitant and their delivery slow, became a key event of the French idealist movement. Napoléon Roinart's adaptation of the *Cantique des cantiques* (*Song of Songs*) followed soon after, in November of the same year. Roinart himself designed the sets, but it seems more than likely that Vuillard lent a hand: his painting *Women in the Garden* (III-31), based clearly on the play, remains his most symbolist work - a *paraphrase*, in the Debussyeen sense, of the sixth 'device' of *Le Cantique des cantiques*, entitled 'Symphony



E. V., Coquelin Cadet as Monsieur de Pourceaugnac by Molière, 1891, brush, ink and watercolour, 20.5 x 13.5 cm. Private collection.



E. V., Coquelin Cadet as Crispin in *Les Folies amoureuses*, 1890-91, brush, ink and watercolour, 20.5 x 13 cm. Private collection.

of Spiritual Love'.<sup>13</sup> Vuillard was thus involved in one of the great moments of the idealist enterprise, during which - in an atmosphere of indescribable confusion - every effort was made to establish 'correspondences' between perceptions and sensations. Many years later the principal organizer of the event, Paul Fort, recalled it with some amusement: 'The spotlights changed colour with each scene, giving an added rhythm, as it were, to the varying surges of feeling, and all kinds of perfume - heliotrope, lily-of-the-valley, benjamin, eau de cologne - filled the air. Poets and technicians installed in all the auditorium's upper boxes tried to outdo one another in squeezing the atomizers that were spreading these scented clouds - rather too scented, in fact; some jokers began sniffing as loud as they could, and the whole show would have ended in the most hilarious chaos had not the blessed protection of the poets ... Verhaeren, Claudel, Moréas, Debussy ... restored a certain order ... But no matter. There was, during this performance (if I can put it this way), a good deal of idealism expended.'<sup>14</sup>

Vuillard had first met Lugné-Poe at the Lycée Condorcet. The encounter was a decisive one - in terms of friendship, initially, but also because it ultimately resulted in a markedly 'expressionist' shift in the avant-garde theatre. At the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, which Vuillard founded with Lugné-Poe and Camille Mauclair in 1893, the Rosicrucian affectations that appealed to Paul Fort were forgotten. Without abandoning Maeterlinck, Lugné-Poe was determined to bring the work of his favourite playwright, the Norwegian Ibsen, to the attention of the Parisian public. In his mem-

oirs, the actor-director recalls in a tone of nostalgia the dreadful conditions under which his Nabi friends painted the scenery: 'Once we'd rented Les Bouffes-du-Nord, we began rehearsals; meanwhile, Édouard Vuillard, with the assistance of a few close friends, Pierre Bonnard, Ranson, Sérusier, consented to paint, on the cold earth, in the scenery workshop on rue de la Chapelle, near the offices of the Petite-Vitesse du Chemin de Fer du Nord. How is it our friends didn't die of bronchitis? It has to be said that Vuillard and his companions, rebuilding at 7 or 8 in the morning the old flats we managed to find, jeopardized their health and youth in this adventure. The Bouffes-du-Nord workshop, roofless, was open to every draught and had no heating. So why should we, the actors, complain?'<sup>15</sup> Improvisation was the name of the game. And camaraderie.

In Vuillard's approach to the theatre, tragedy combined harmoniously with comedy. He could be amused by the contortions of Miss Helyett (III-1) - unlike his friend Romain Coolus<sup>16</sup> - but was also deeply affected by Maeterlinck's overwhelmingly intense sense of fate, which tainted every atmosphere. In fact, during this period it was Vuillard's aim to accomplish this same *work of destiny* through his painting. Moreover, he pursued his exploration of theatricality in subsequent stages of his art; for it seems clear to us that he subtly manipulated those close to him, instigating where necessary family situations that were transformed first into dramas - in which each relative played a role - and then into the *subjects* of his painting. His heroines (seamstresses, apprentices, mother, sister) took on the physical substance of such Ibsenian creations as Nora, Hedda Gabler and Madame Alving. The Nabi painter's little women, slipping in through a door, balancing on tiptoe, submitting to a scolding, reading Madame's newspaper, are like more mundane versions of Ellida Wangel, the 'Lady from the Sea', whose wild nature no-one understands:

Wangel: Yes, you cannot bear your surroundings here. The mountains crush you, and weigh upon your heart. Nothing is open enough for you here. The heavens above you are not spacious enough. The air is not strong and bracing enough.

Ellida: You are a right. Night and day, winter and summer, it weighs upon me - this irresistible homesickness for the sea.

Or they recall other displaced characters, like Mélisande, imprisoned in the castle of Allemonde:

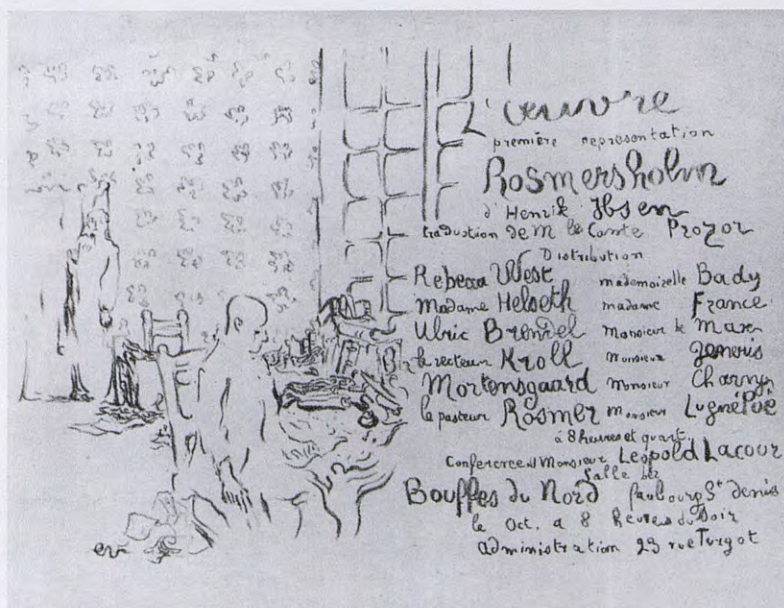


'I am lost ... lost here ... I am not from here ... I was not born here' (act I, scene 2).

And again:

'I am not happy here' (act II, scene 2).

With something like obsession, Vuillard explored a small number of ordinary situations, featuring characters whose gestures seem almost to be drawn from a *repertoire*. The world he created changed while remaining the same, just like the characters in a Maeterlinck play, who repeat their words, stammer or sink into the enforced silence of their own stupor. In the preface to his *Théâtre*, the author of *Les Aveugles* (*The Blind*) seems to regret not having cut out some of the 'astonished repetitions that give the characters the appearance of slightly deaf sleepwalkers continually wrenched awake from a painful dream'.<sup>17</sup> To judge from contemporary reviews, audiences found these parrot-like repetitions extraordinarily irritating. Yet even a critic as unforgiving as Jules Lemaître could not entirely conceal his admiration for Maeterlinck's 'pared down, chilling images, composed of small, simplified characters, distant and "delocalized", living in castles and gloomy forests ...'.<sup>18</sup> In 1893, just before the production of *Rosmersholm*, Mallarmé also spoke out in Maeterlinck's defence: 'Perhaps so tactile an atmosphere inspires, in the anguish it creates in the author, this frequent need to utter the same things twice, to reassure him that they will have established – what else – a consciousness of the echo. A frequent and otherwise totally inexplicable piece of witchcraft; it would be a mistake to see it as a technique.'<sup>19</sup>



E. V., Frontispiece for *Rosmersholm* by Henrik Ibsen, programme of the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, October 1893, lithograph, 21 x 31 cm.

Vuillard's collaboration with Lugné-Poe reached its climax in 1894-95. The artist produced a total of ten widely acclaimed lithographed playbill covers, while continuing to design inspired stage sets for the Théâtre de l'Œuvre's productions. During this theatrical period he cemented friendships that would last for years – Marthe Mellot, Lugné-Poe himself, Romain Coolus, Tristan Bernard – and it enabled him to progress towards a more 'adult' approach to stage design. Memories of the puppet shows he had mounted with Ranson began to fade. Now, Paris's intellectuals would flock to every Théâtre de l'Œuvre performance, and Vuillard was in the spotlight. He was being talked about, noticed, admired.

The sets he made for Gerhardt Hauptmann's *Âmes solitaires* in February 1894 earned ecstatic praise from Alfred Jarry: 'Each in a tower of diamonds with a single window, souls ... sleep isolated in the centre of a gossamer hammock, imagining the realm of truth to be open because hard transparency surrounds them unperceived.'<sup>20</sup> And when Lugné-Poe mounted *La Vie muette* in November of 1894, Coolus liked nothing about the production except Vuillard's playbill: 'The programme designed by M. Édouard Vuillard adorns Maurice Beaubourg's cerebral drama with a synthetic and highly expressive image.'<sup>21</sup>

His theatre work also allowed Vuillard to become more expert than any other artist of the time in the medium of distemper, or *peinture à la colle*. All his Nabi friends, including Sérusier, admired the virtuosity with which, armed with a broom dipped in paint, he would lay down colours that initially looked dull but, as they dried, were transformed into backdrops both glowing and subtle. Distemper became his signature medium, especially after 1905-10. He acknowledged this particular debt to Lugné-Poe in a handwritten note: 'It is not for me to speak of what the theatre owes him, but I can say that I owe him a very special debt of gratitude. He gave me the opportunity, while I was helping in a small way with the improvised fabrication of sets for his earliest shows, to discover a method of painting with distemper, which was to prove extremely valuable to me in my own work.'<sup>22</sup> In fact, Vuillard was the only one of the Nabis who achieved a really professional level of scenography. This is evident in such works as *Scene from an Ibsen Play* (III-38) or some pen and ink sketch for *La Vie muette*. He also made some highly amusing caricature sketches of Lugné-Poe playing opposite Berthe Bady in roles penned by Ibsen and Maurice Beaubourg, whose expressionist poses



Ibsen returning to Norway, cartoon taken from a Norwegian newspaper.

reveal the mood of humour and amity that linked these young artists. Vuillard's style was well suited to this repertoire. As Lugné-Poe later wrote: '*Rosmersholm* was a triumph, thanks in large part to the contributions of Édouard Vuillard and Hermann Bang. Vuillard was marvellous with his economical inventiveness and his flair for creating stage sets and atmosphere. The décor for the second act added distinction and intimacy to our acting. For the first time, Ibsen was being *authentically performed* in Paris'<sup>23</sup> (see ill.).

In December 1896 Vuillard collaborated with Sérusier and Bonnard on the sets for Alfred Jarry's *Ubu roi*. And once again the event became a landmark of avant-garde theatre. The joyful provocations of Jarry's text went far beyond anything yet encountered in idealist theatre. But around this time, when Lugné-Poe turned his back on symbolism and Ibsen in favour of a more modern approach, Vuillard began gradually to loosen his ties to the Théâtre de l'Œuvre. He did not abandon the theatre altogether, however. In January of 1898, he and Bonnard painted the décor of the Théâtre des Pantins, founded by Jarry and Franc-Nohain in Claude Terrasse's apartment at 6, rue Ballu.<sup>24</sup> Later, his theatrical incursions were only occasional: a tribute to the

singer Jeanne Raunay in *Iphigénie*, a scene from Greek theatre (probably either *The Choephoroi* or *Elektra* by Hofmannsthal); a portrait of Lugné-Poe's new wife, Suzanne Després; and later, when his tastes were leaning more towards boulevard theatre and vaudeville, he designed the sets for Sacha Guitry's *L'illusionniste*. Most of his creative forces were being channelled by this time into major decorations for private apartments. Nevertheless, his Journal indicates that he was still an avid fan of the avant-garde: he went to see operas by Wagner, and *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and was a great admirer of the Ballets Russes, attending their performances on several occasions between 1911 and 1914. Interestingly, one of Vuillard's last major works, created in 1937, stands as a retrospective summary of his love for the theatre. A kitsch panel painted for the Palais de Chaillot, it is a tribute to Comedy that brings together Molière and Shakespeare. After the painter's death an old comrade-in-arms, the poet Henri de Régnier (see ill.), paid posthumous homage to Vuillard's theatrical inventions of the glorious 1890s, in the form of a sonnet about the Théâtre de l'Œuvre's 1894 production of his own play *La Gardienne*, for which Vuillard created the sets<sup>25</sup>:

VUILLARD, hark back! 'La Gardienne,' the scene,  
The Théâtre de l'Œuvre, where you created,  
You, unknown artist, of name unfêted,  
The décor where her psychic shade was seen.

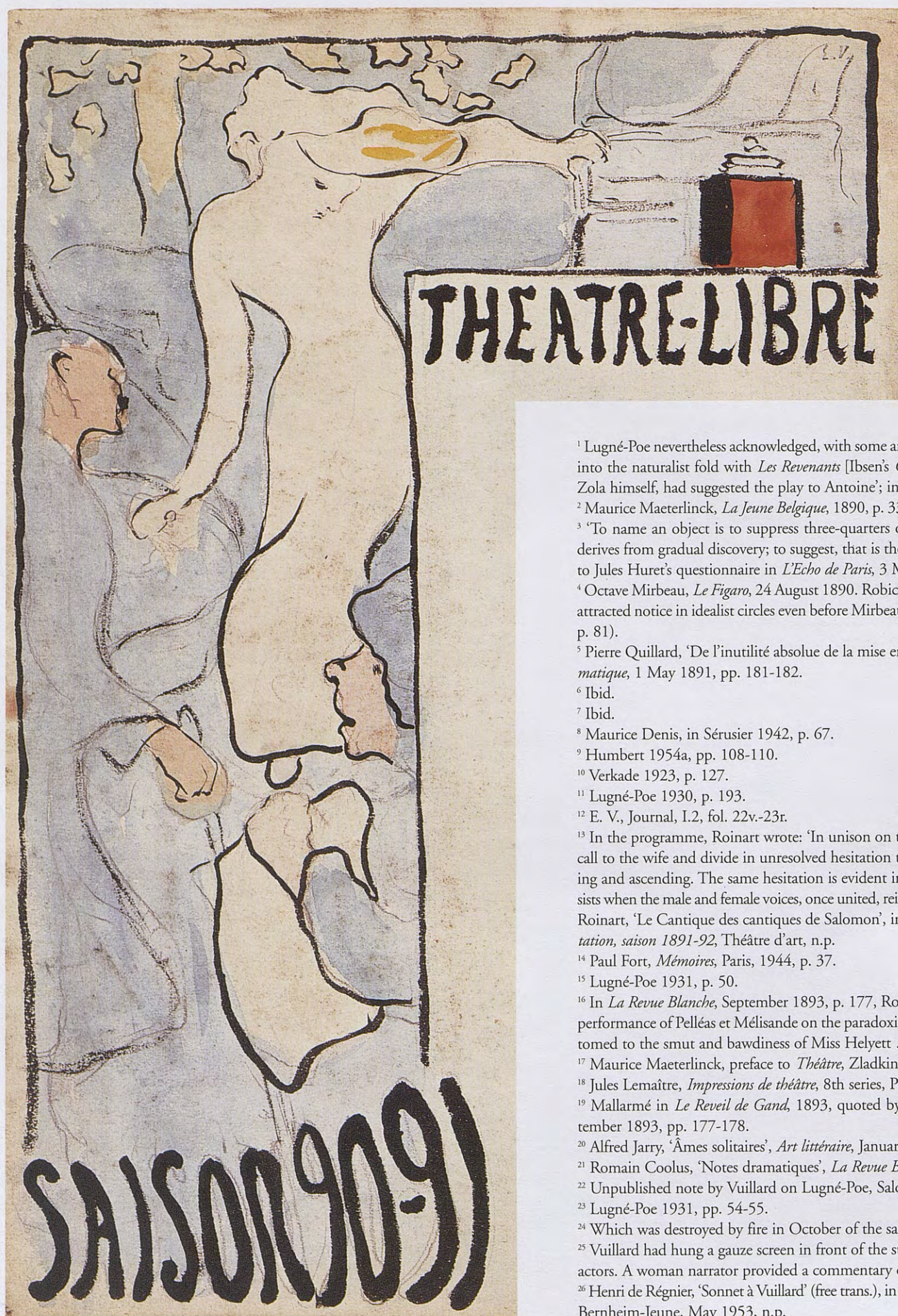
These days are so long gone, and yet recall  
Vuillard! The dialogue scarce begun, came  
Jeering, laughter, cries. None those nights found fame,  
Not poet's rhyme, nor you, nor actor's drawl...

Oh, those splendid nights of youth and daring,  
Home we went, quitting brilliance for tenebrity,  
More sure than ever of our work and destiny!

And of those who mocked, not one beholding  
Behind the sets of cardboard and of size,  
Over the horizon of art sublime, your star arise!<sup>26</sup>

Clearly, the four years during which Vuillard was an enthusiastic contributor to the Théâtre de l'Œuvre etched themselves in the memories of his contemporaries.





E. V., *Project for the programme for the Théâtre-Libre*, 1890, brush, pen, ink and watercolour, 29.7 x 20.4 cm. Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam.

<sup>1</sup> Lugné-Poe nevertheless acknowledged, with some amusement: 'Antoine had let the wolf into the naturalist fold with *Les Revenants* [Ibsen's *Ghosts*] (1890). And Zola, the great Zola himself, had suggested the play to Antoine'; in Lugné-Poe 1930, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *La Jeune Belgique*, 1890, p. 331, quoted in Robichez 1957, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> 'To name an object is to suppress three-quarters of the pleasure of the poem, which derives from gradual discovery; to suggest, that is the dream.' Stéphane Mallarmé, reply to Jules Huret's questionnaire in *L'Echo de Paris*, 3 March 1891.

<sup>4</sup> Octave Mirbeau, *Le Figaro*, 24 August 1890. Robichez points out that Maeterlinck had attracted notice in idealist circles even before Mirbeau's blistering article (Robichez 1957, p. 81).

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Quillard, 'De l'inutilité absolue de la mise en scène exacte', *La Revue d'Art Dramatique*, 1 May 1891, pp. 181-182.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Denis, in Sérusier 1942, p. 67.

<sup>9</sup> Humbert 1954a, pp. 108-110.

<sup>10</sup> Verkade 1923, p. 127.

<sup>11</sup> Lugné-Poe 1930, p. 193.

<sup>12</sup> E. V., *Journal*, I.2, fol. 22v-23r.

<sup>13</sup> In the programme, Roinart wrote: 'In unison on the note. Principle: the companions call to the wife and divide in unresolved hesitation the two attractive seconds; descending and ascending. The same hesitation is evident in the choir of companions and persists when the male and female voices, once united, reiterate the consolatory call.' Napoléon Roinart, 'Le Cantique des cantiques de Salomon', in *Programme de la première représentation, saison 1891-92*, Théâtre d'art, n.p.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Fort, *Mémoires*, Paris, 1944, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> Lugné-Poe 1931, p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> In *La Revue Blanche*, September 1893, p. 177, Romain Coolus spoke of '...the single performance of Pelléas et Mélisande on the paradoxical stage of Les Bouffes, more accented to the smut and bawdiness of Miss Helyett ...'.

<sup>17</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, preface to *Théâtre*, Zladkine reprint, 1979, p. II.

<sup>18</sup> Jules Lemaître, *Impressions de théâtre*, 8th series, Paris, 1895, p. 141.

<sup>19</sup> Mallarmé in *Le Reveil de Gand*, 1893, quoted by Coolus in *La Revue Blanche*, September 1893, pp. 177-178.

<sup>20</sup> Alfred Jarry, 'Âmes solitaires', *Art littéraire*, January-February 1894, p. 22.

<sup>21</sup> Romain Coolus, 'Notes dramatiques', *La Revue Blanche*, December 1894, p. 567.

<sup>22</sup> Unpublished note by Vuillard on Lugné-Poe, Salomon archives.

<sup>23</sup> Lugné-Poe 1931, pp. 54-55.

<sup>24</sup> Which was destroyed by fire in October of the same year.

<sup>25</sup> Vuillard had hung a gauze screen in front of the stage, which isolated and blurred the actors. A woman narrator provided a commentary on the action from the proscenium.

<sup>26</sup> Henri de Régnier, 'Sonnet à Vuillard' (free trans.), in exhibition catalogue *Vuillard*, Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, May 1953, n.p.

– Sarton 1959, pp. 166-167 – Preston 1971, pp. 67 (col. ill.), 228 – Memorial Art Gallery, *Gallery Notes*, Jan. 1973 (ill.) – Mauner 1978, pp. 130, 237, 266, fig. 91 – Oakley 1981, p. 7, col. pl. 2 – Georges 1982, pp. 42, 163 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 285-286, fig. 148 – Kelder 1986, fig. 198 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 12 (ill.) – Frèches-Thory, exhib. cat., London-Paris, 1991-92, p. 360, fig. 426 – Forgione 1992, pp. 96-97, fig. 53 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 34 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *A figure writing on the edge of a table, with one knee on the floor. His face is in shadow; the light falls heavily on his hand, his shoulders and part of his brow. The style of the composition verges on that of a caricature.* (JS)

Before 1900, Vuillard made few *portraits*, in the strict sense of the term, of the people around him. Here, Aurélien Lugné-Poe is shown in an unstudied 'snapshot', writing on the corner of a table, 'scratching at some manuscripts with a meticulous air, a stern-faced, understanding clergyman'.<sup>1</sup> His features are elusive, but Vuillard's main purpose is to express the model's absorption in his task by limiting his palette to a few subdued tones and emphasizing the strong light that enters from the left and strikes the hands busily writing. Lugné-Poe's precariously balanced position at the side of the table is as much an allusion to the frenetic activity of the youthful, hard-working actor and stage director as to the cramped conditions in the artist's attic studio in the rue Pigalle, that Vuillard and Bonnard, the Dioscuri of the Nabi movement, shared with Lugné-Poe. According to the latter, it was as 'large as a pocket handkerchief and [its] window took its light from the rue Pigalle'.<sup>2</sup>



Portrait photograph of Lugné-Poe, c. 1893-94. Private collection.

The folds of Lugné-Poe's jacket, rendered with bold red lines, flatten the volumes, separate the masses and, above all, enliven the grey-beige fabric. The technique employed in this small painting is similar to that of *Woman in Profile Wearing a Green Hat* (II-79) and *In Bed* (II-123), two equally bold incursions into the *cloisonnisme* advocated by his friend Paul Sérusier.

Camille Mauclair, founder in 1893 of the Théâtre de l'Œuvre with Vuillard and Lugné-Poe – before becoming the inveterate anti-Semite and scourge of 'dago artists'<sup>3</sup> that we know – was loud in his praise for this composition, which was shown in July 1893 at the Barc de Bouteville gallery in an exhibition entitled *Portrait du vingtième siècle* ('Portrait of the Twentieth Century'): 'the living and singular Lugné-Poe by Monsieur Édouard Vuillard, one of the up-and-coming masters of the contemporary School, a true twentieth-century man!'<sup>4</sup>



III-26

<sup>1</sup> Anonymous, 'Portraits du vingtième siècle', *La Plume*, 1 October 1893, p. 415.

<sup>2</sup> Lugné-Poe 1930, p. 191.

<sup>3</sup> In French, 'métèques de l'art'.

<sup>4</sup> C. Mauclair, 'Exhibition des portraits du prochain siècle', *Essais d'art*, Oct. 1893, p. 120.

### III-26 Lugné-Poe in Profile

c. 1890-91

Oil on cardboard, 26.2 x 30.7 cm

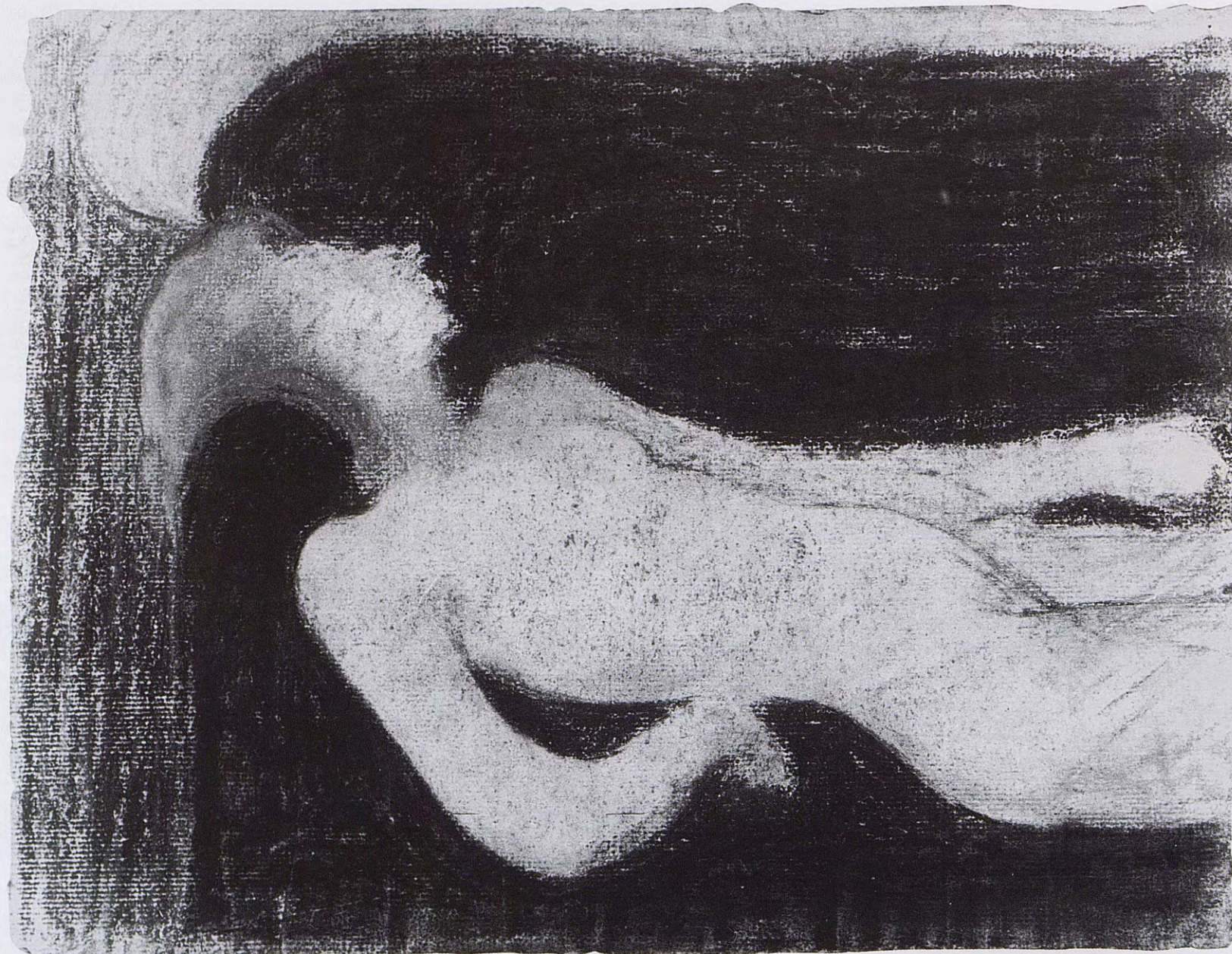
Stamp I, lower left

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 28 April 1966, lot 105 – Sale, Hôtel Rameau, Versailles, 2 May 1962, lot 110 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 5 July 1973, lot 52 – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 15 Nov. 1988, lot 94 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *Simplified profile of a man with brown hair, probably Lugné-Poe; bare cardboard ground.* (AC)





III-27

### III-27 Reclining Nude

c. 1891  
Pastel on paper, 24 × 30 cm  
Current whereabouts unknown

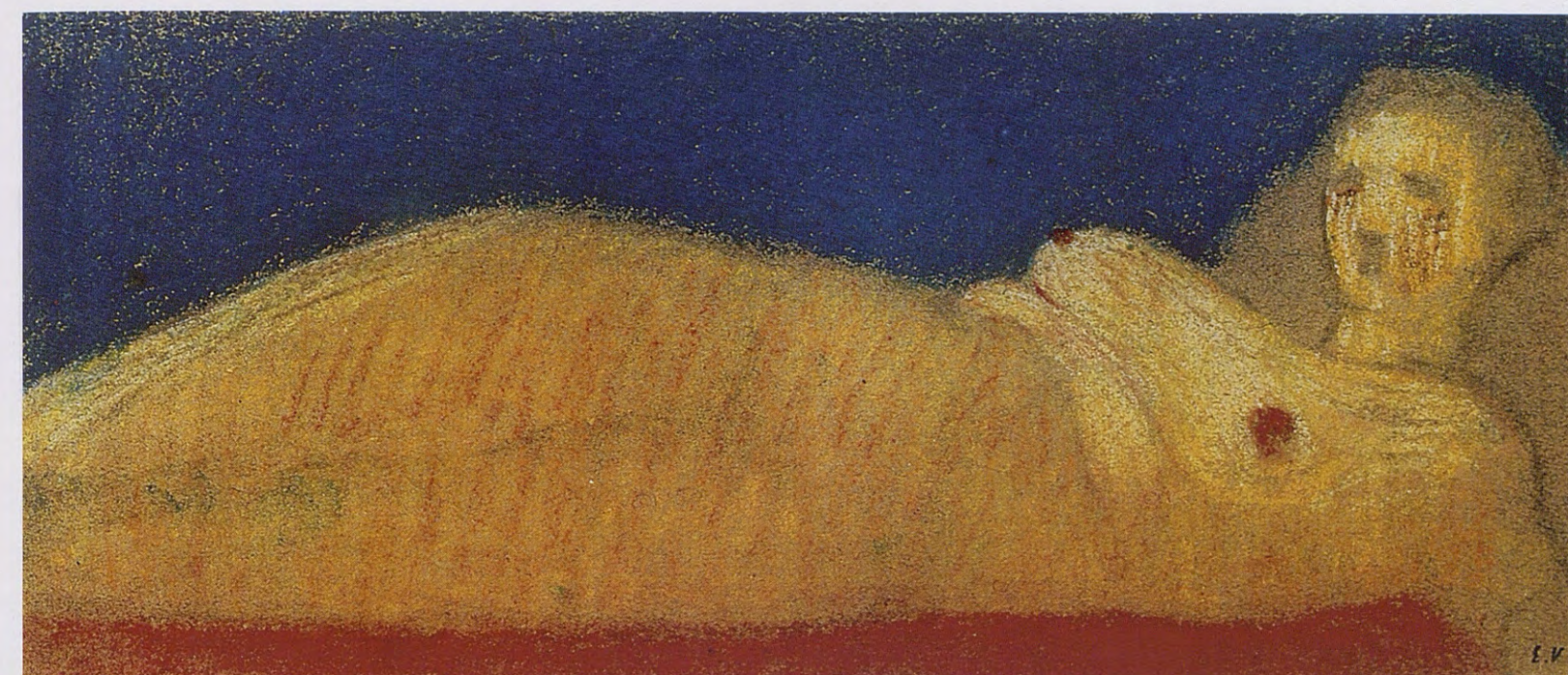
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Lucian Goldschmidt, New York – Current whereabouts unknown.

This and the following work are very different to the studies of nudes in the studio that Vuillard would produce after 1900. A far cry from naturalism, they should perhaps be seen in conjunction with Maurice Denis' 'Snake-woman', a figure that is still some-

thing of a conundrum. The 'painter of fine icons' mentions her in a letter to Lugné-Poe, who was on military service at the time: 'The week has been spent on extremely serious work. My Reclining woman (which you haven't seen; she's called Nahasch, the serpent, a symbol of universal attraction, oh, but I mustn't indulge in explaining things which are of little interest to you). My Reclining woman is coming along nicely'.<sup>1</sup> However, this large 'Snake-woman composition', as Denis himself referred to it,<sup>2</sup> is known to us only through a small sketch (priv. coll.) and via its reflection in a mirror in two Bonnard paintings: *Young Girl at Her Toilet-Table* and *The Fireplace* (see ill.). This snake-woman, doubtless derived from



Pierre Bonnard, *Young Girl at Her Toilet-Table*, 1916, oil on canvas. Private collection.



III-28



Pierre Bonnard, *The Fireplace or Woman Going about Her Toilette, or Bust of a Woman Seen in the Mirror*, 1916, oil on canvas. Private collection.

Symbolist literature and theatre – one thinks of Rémy de Gourmont, author of the

unstageable *Lilith* (1892) and translator of Clement of Saragossa's fifth-century *Hamar-tigeneia* (*Genesis of Sin*), in which Eve the temptress, transformed into a serpent, plays a major role – may also have inspired Vuillard in his Symbolist period. All these Symbolist-looking female nudes are related to a sketch Vuillard made for a frontispiece for the Théâtre-Libre (see III-29 and ill.)

<sup>1</sup> Lugné-Poe 1930, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> This information was provided directly by the artist's son, Dominique Denis, and by Anne Gruson, whom the author wishes to thank.

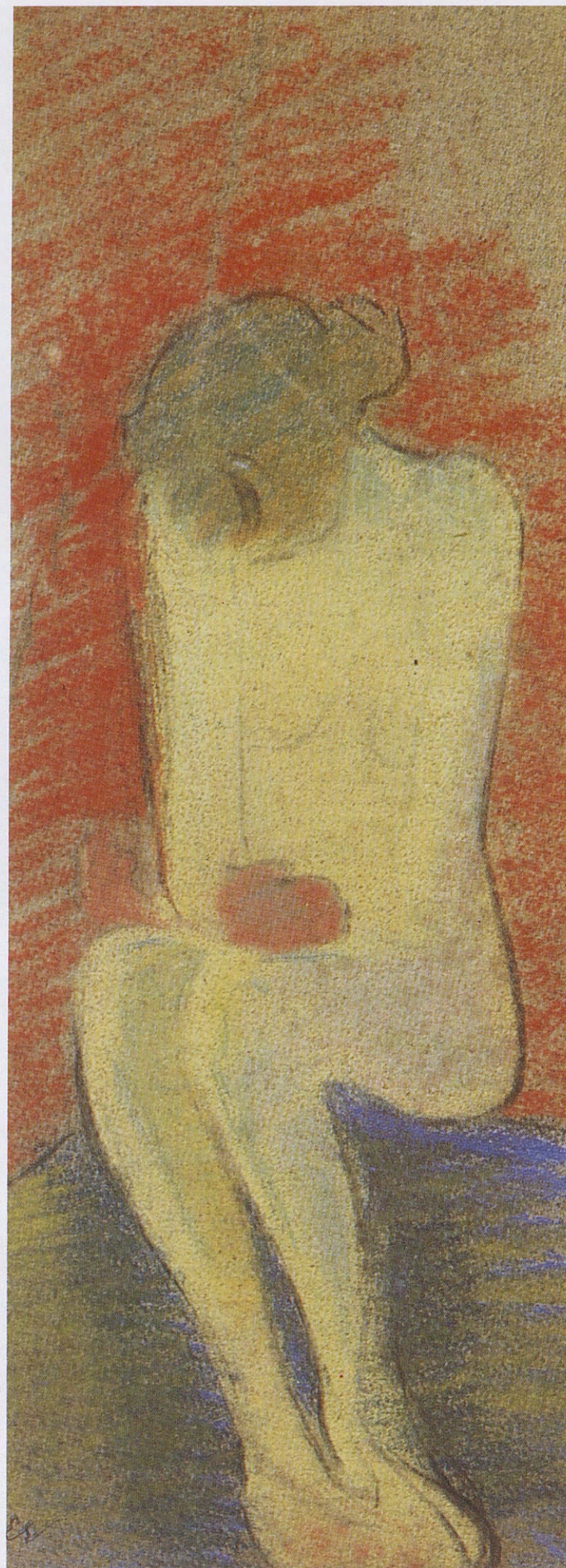
### III-28 Reclining Nude

c. 1891  
Pastel on paper, 13 × 32 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 April 1987, lot 306 – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 22 June 1987, lot 420 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Paul Vallotton, 1982, no. 121.





III-29

## III-29

## Figure of Grief

1890-91

Pastel on paper, 40 × 17 cm

Stamp 5, lower left

Private collection

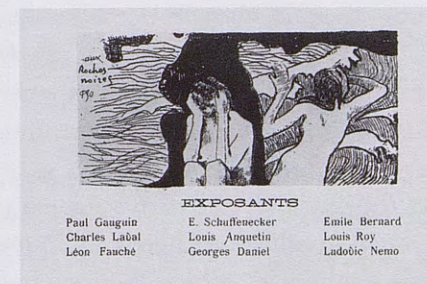
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris – Chayette – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 19 June 1985, lot 8 (ill.) – Sale, Casino d'Aix-les-Bains (France), 25 June 1989 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 16 Nov. 1989, lot 127, bought in – Sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris, 15 June 1990, lot 6 (col. ill.), bought in – Private collection.

**Bibliography:** Eckert Boyer 1998, pp. 36 (ill.), 90 [Young girl with burned hands].

A young woman, her face masked by her hair, sits huddled and naked in the foreground. Her attitude of prostration, distress, even shame, might initially lead one to suppose that the subject of this composition is *La Fille aux mains coupées* ('The girl with the severed hands'), the heroine of the eponymous drama by Pierre Quillard, staged at the Théâtre d'Art in March 1891. In order to escape the 'brutal, incestuous caresses' of her father ('the convulsive warrior overwhelms her with his caresses'), 'the screaming child' has her arms cut off ('brandishing the twin torches of her mutilated arms in the dim light').<sup>1</sup> But it is inconceivable that Vuillard would depict a theatre scene in such a bluntly literal manner. Furthermore, the young girl in Pierre Quillard's play never appears naked and does not torment herself with thoughts of her father's hands.<sup>2</sup> The idea for a simple figure of grief and shame may derive from a page in the artist's *Journal* (written at some point between November 1890 and March 1891), where a similar female figure appears in a sketch, with her face hatched to suggest a blush of shame (see ill.). Vuillard's tentative approach can be followed step by step in this sketch. The most strongly delineated, yet most abstract image, at top left, appears to be drawn from the allegory of death in Gauguin's celebrated *Life and Death* (1889),<sup>3</sup> a painting shown at the Café Volpini during the Universal Exhibition of 1889, and perhaps even better known through one of its

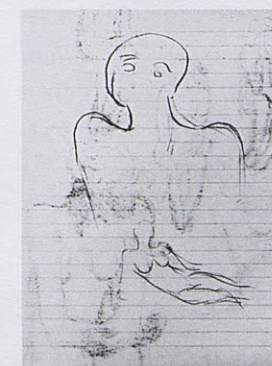
E. V., *Journal*, I.2, fol. 27r.

lithographic variations. There is indeed a marked resemblance between Vuillard's huddled figure and Gauguin's reworking of the drawing *Aux roches noires* (*By the Black Rocks*) for the frontispiece of the Volpini

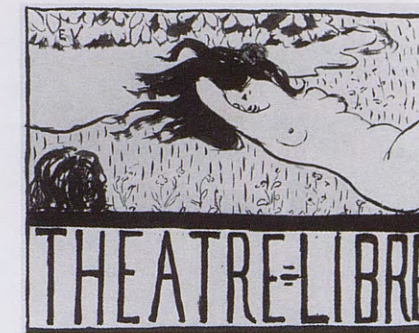


Paul Gauguin, *At the Black Rocks*, 1889, drawing reproduced in the Volpini exhibition catalogue.

exhibition catalogue (see ill.). What we are confronted with, then, is a transposition of Gauguin's image in the light of the avant-garde paintings Vuillard most admired at the time, thus enabling him to root his 'figure of grief' in the Symbolist climate of the day. If we consider not just the right-hand page of the *Journal*<sup>4</sup> but the page facing it as well (see ill.) – the woman reclining like a river goddess towards the bottom of the page clearly forms part of the same research, testifying to the painter's trial-and-error approach – all of these female nudes, whether reclining (II-110, II-111, III-27) or bowed in shame (III-29), appear as a series of variations for a

E. V., *Journal*, I.2, fol. 26v.

programme illustration for the Théâtre-Libre, of which the artist left several 'definitive' sketches (see ill.). Indeed, Vuillard's *Journal* between late 1890 and early 1891 contains several further ideas for fron-



E. V., *Programme for the Théâtre-Libre*, c. 1890-91, sketch. Private collection.

tispieces, including an elegant couple in a barouche. To our knowledge, unlike his drawing for the Théâtre-Libre's production of *Monsieur Bute*, none of these sketches and female nudes culminated in a lithographic version.

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Quillard, text established by Jeremy Whistle, University of Exeter, 1976, pp. 5–6.

<sup>2</sup> Eckert Boyer 1998, p. 90. Apparently, the French metaphor, 'brûler les mains de caresses', which means to overwhelm a person with caresses, was taken literally by the American scholar. Hence the understandable misinterpretation.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Gauguin, *Life and Death*, 1889, oil on canvas, 92 × 73 cm, Mahmoud Khalil Museum, Cairo.

<sup>4</sup> E. V., *Journal*, I.2, fol. 27r.





III-30

## III-30

*Berthe au grand pié*

1891

Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 19.5 x 26.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, Japan

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Lefevre, London – John Levy, Great Britain – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 30 June 1966, lot 103 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, Tokyo, 3 Oct. 1969, lot 372 (col. ill.) – Yasuaki Iwasaki, Kagawa – Private collection, Japan.

**Exhibition:** London, Lefevre, Nov.-Dec. 1962, no. 23 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Cogeval, 2002, p. 41.

It might have been tempting to identify this woman reclining in a forest glade as Mélisande, in Act I, scene 2 of Maeterlinck's famous play, when Golaud discovers her weeping over the crown she has lost. But would Vuillard have left out the only significant element in the scene, the fountain in which Mélisande has dropped her crown? This seems rather improbable, even allowing for the artist's bias towards stylisation during his Nabi period. It is far more likely that, as is the case with the *Women in a Garden*, which he transposed from *The Song of Songs* (see III-31), he has depicted



E. V., sketch for the frontispiece of 'Berthe au grand pié', 1891, graphite and charcoal on paper, 20 x 32 cm. Private collection.

a scene drawn from a stage play for which he had designed the sets (Paul Vogler painted those of *Pelléas*). On the same evening (11 December 1891) that saw presentations of Maeterlinck's *Les Aveugles*, Napoléon Roinart's *Le Cantique des cantiques* and Jules Laforgue's *Le Concile féerique*, Parisian theatre-goers also had the choice of attending *La Geste du Roi*, which comprised three dramatic interludes written by Stuart Merrill (*La Chanson de Roland*), Camille Maclair (*Fierabras*) and Adolphe Retté (*Berthe au grand pié*). With Henri-Gabriel Ibels, Vuillard worked on the sets for Retté's short dramatisation, which focussed upon the episode of Berthe banished to the forest. Every Frenchman is familiar with the enduring legend of a queen unjustly accused of having been unfaithful to her husband: abandoned by the king to the wild beasts of the forest, she manages to survive through her courage and piety. The plot is all but identical to that of *Geneviève de Brabant*,

whose misfortunes were soon to kindle the malice of Erik Satie. In his theatrical memoirs, Adolphe Retté tells of the circumstances surrounding the rewriting of this poem by Adenet Le Roi, a thirteenth-century trouvère from Brabant: 'Thus, at the instigation of our intrepid director, Pierre Quillard, Stuart Merrill and I translated some fragments of epic poems into contemporary French. I had chosen *Berthe au grand pié*. Without worrying about giving an archaic feel to my version, I had this outdated lady express feelings and attitudes which would probably have flabbergasted the unknown author of the original poem. Ah, how little I cared for historic truth!'<sup>1</sup> Yielded up to the harsh cold in a hostile forest, the queen awaits death, seeing it as a deliverance. As in *Women in a Garden*, we are not presented with an exact transposition of what the public saw on stage, but probably an idealised transcription of the images the medieval narrative conjured up in the artist's imagination. Indeed, in 'La mise en scène symboliste',<sup>2</sup> which appeared in *Le Gaulois* on 14 December 1891, the set for *Berthe au grand pié* is said to be 'of a purplish colour, with violet rocks and golden rain'.<sup>3</sup> Retté, meanwhile, describes the costume of the bumbling actress who played Berthe as vaguely that 'of a medieval lady of the manor: a sky-blue dress lined with ermine – made with rabbit fur – and a red leather purse; on her head, a tottering steeple-hat spangled with sequins. This absurd outfit had no doubt been copied from one of those colour pictures adorning confectioners' boxes. I was appalled.'<sup>4</sup>

Vuillard also sketched a frontispiece for *Berthe* (see ill.) that was not subsequently published. The play's title is inscribed in a medieval-looking streamer, and a female figure is lying prostrate against a tree in the middle of a forest. Here, too, there is no sign of the rocks or the golden rain described in *Le Gaulois*, an additional proof of Vuillard's freedom when it came to interpreting a given subject.

<sup>1</sup> Adolphe Retté, *La Basse-cour d'Apollon*, Paris, 1924, pp. 172–173.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Symbolist stage'.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Robichez 1957, p. 132 (no. 69).

<sup>4</sup> Adolphe Retté, *op. cit.*, pp. 173–174.

## III-31

*Women in the Garden or Le Cantique des cantiques*

1891

Oil on canvas, 74 x 51 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Paul Ranson, Paris – Private collection – Private collection, United States, 1998.

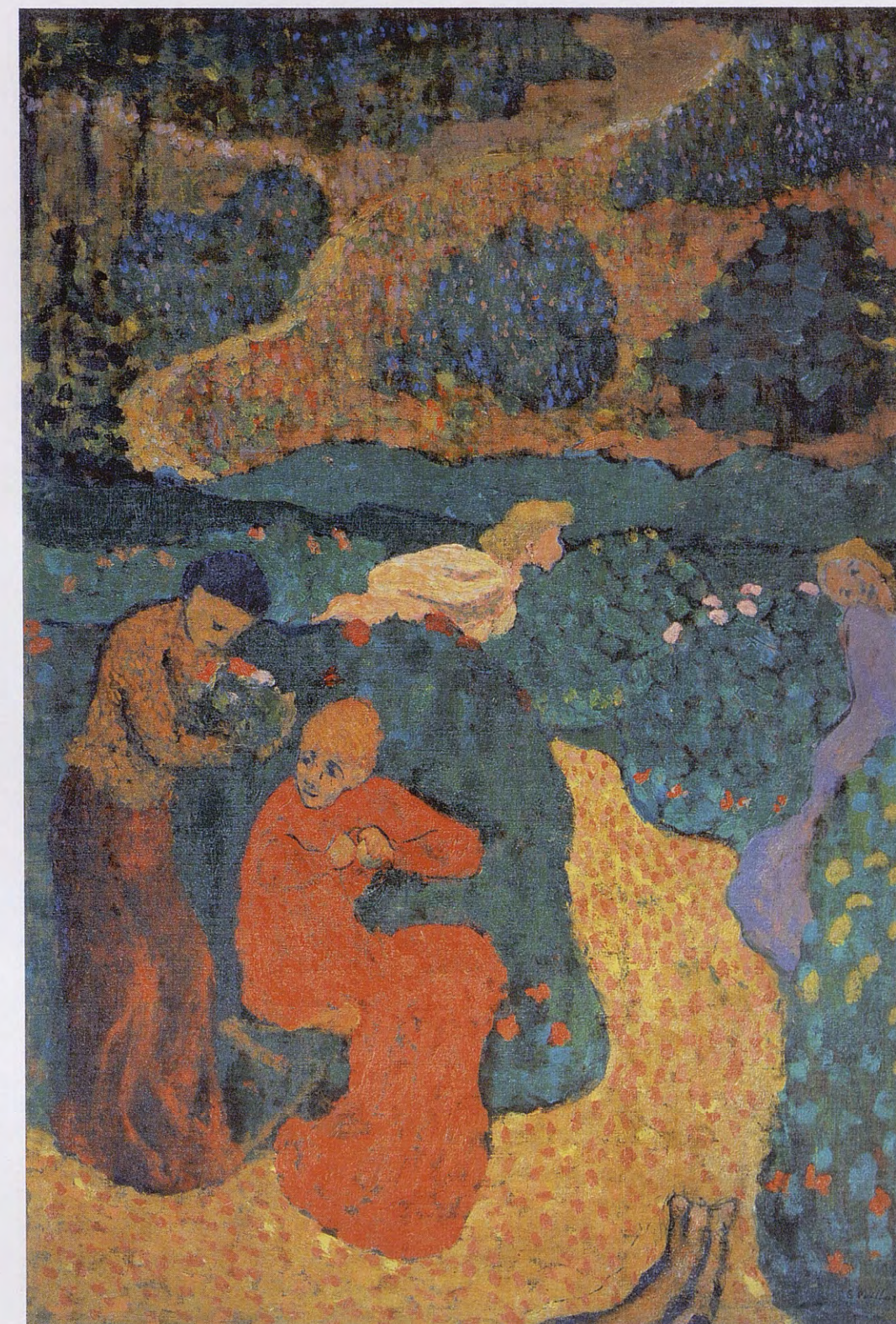
**Exhibitions:** Mannheim (Germany), Kunsthalle, 1963–64, no. 173 [Paul Ranson: *Femmes dans un jardin*] – Florence, 1998, no. 29, p. 69 (col. ill.); and Montreal, 1998, no. 172, p. 33 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Mauner 1978, pp. 212–213, 246, fig. 59 – Cogeval, exhib. cat. 1998, Florence, pp. 69 (col. ill.), 184; and Montreal, pp. 33 (col. ill.), 118 – Cogeval 2002, p. 32.

Formerly attributed to Paul Ranson through having long remained in his studio, this little-known painting was in due course restored to Vuillard by George Mauner. Steeping us in the atmosphere of Maurice Denis' *Four Panels for a Young Girl's Room* (1891–92),<sup>1</sup> the composition brings together a group of women – or, to be more precise, of ambiguous 'souls' – in stylised robes, a winding path and a patchwork of flowers in the distance, all enlivened by a few discreet 'chromoluminarist' notes reminiscent of one of Kerr-Xavier Roussel's Symbolist scenes. Here the 'Zouave Nabi' encroaches knowingly on the Symbolist sensibility, so much so that the painting at first



Maurice Denis, *The Mystical Grape Harvest*, c. 1890, oil on canvas. Private collection.



III-31

appears to be the 'visual counterpart' to a poetic text or, better still, to the scene of a play. Vuillard, it should be borne in mind, was taking part at this juncture in the more hermetic experiments of Paul Fort's Théâtre d'Art; and, as noted above, on the memorable evening of 11 December 1891, Salomon's *Le Cantique des cantiques* ('The Song of Songs') was publicly performed in

an adaptation by Napoléon Roinart, with Maurice Maeterlinck's *Les Aveugles*, Rémy de Gourmont's *Théodat*, Merrill, Maclair and Retté's *La Geste du Roi* and *Le Concile féerique* by Jules Laforgue. It is hard to imagine a more daunting programme, but such was the excitement and youth of the participants (authors and painters as well as actors) that many an artless detail was for-



given. The Nabi artists were responsible for the sets, costumes and programme illustrations for these short plays. The frontispiece designed by Vuillard for *Le Concile féerique*, with its two lovers entwined within billowing, Jugendstil-like waves, is one of the high points of decadent, 'Tristanesque' sensuality. The future painter of *Public Gardens* was then at the pinnacle of his commitment to the 'Ideal', and his Symbolist imagination was in full spate.

*Le Cantique des cantiques* unfolded in eight *devises* or tableaux, in the hieratic atmosphere of medieval mystery plays, each *devise* introducing a 'fourfold orchestration' of Word, Music, Colour and Fragrances – a somewhat amateurish manner of presenting, in the vein of Rimbaud, the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* then in vogue. The sixth *devise*, *Solitudes*, revolves around the sadness of the Queen, her fidelity severely put to the test by the King who keeps a secret watch over her. 'Overwhelmed by her solitude, the Queen laments. Her female companions console her, and her male companions, carrying out the King's unspoken wishes, sing the praises of the beloved', state the stage directions. The actual text of *The Song of Songs* now takes on an ecstatic beauty:

'With my own hands I opened to my love, but my love had turned away and gone by; my heart sank when he turned his back. I sought him but I did not find him, I called him but he did not answer... I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, will you not tell him that I am faint with love?'<sup>2</sup>

We know from Paul Fort's *Memoirs*<sup>3</sup> that the performance marked a turning-point in the public reception of Symbolism. The lighting changed with every scene, and this, in combination with the fragrances released at moments throughout the drama, played a substantial role in turning this experimental soirée into a veritable *succès de scandale*. Another fact lends credence to this Symbolist theatrical interpretation first put forward in 1998 (Florence 1998, exhib. cat., no. 29). A contemporaneous painting by Maurice Denis, *The Mystical Grape Harvest*

(see ill.), depicts nuns collecting the blood of Christ in a Synthetist-style vineyard dominated by the radiant body of Jesus. The visual analogy with Vuillard's *Women in the Garden*<sup>4</sup> is striking: in both cases, the *cloisonniste* technique is tempered by an empirical pointillism that is more decorative than scientific; the figures of the women, their slow, hieratic gestures, interweave with the tracery of the vegetation. As an epigraph to *The Mystical Grape Harvest*, Maurice Denis inscribed a quotation drawn, precisely, from The Song of Songs (1, 14): 'BOTRUS CYPRI DILECTUS / MEUS MIHI IN VINEIS / ENGADDI' ('My beloved is for me a cluster of henna-blossom/ from the vineyards of En-gedi'). What is more, the two canvases are identical in size (74 x 51 cm), which suggests that they were either meant to form a diptych inspired by the same literary motif, or were painted for a decorative ensemble to which other Nabi artists may have contributed. Perhaps we should consider the possibility that these two works, steeped in Symbolism, hung on the walls of Paul Ranson's studio, the 'temple' of Nabi art? Denis naturally explored the mystical and redemptive aspects of The Song of Songs, whilst Vuillard, drawing inspiration from the sensuality of the Biblical verses, sought to create a veritable choreography of rapture.

All in all, this painting transports us beyond time into a wholly Symbolist climate – into the atmosphere of Debussy's veiled sorrow in *La Demoiselle élue* and of César Franck's *Béatitudes*. A large preparatory sketch shows us the various stages of the composition envisaged in terms of masses. Above all, we must recall the fine preparatory drawing (see ill.), with its stylistic device of a central figure placed behind a grove, which seems to have come straight out of Botticelli. Note, too, the splendid arrangement of bold colours: the mauve, the reds, the pearly tones of the figure behind the trees. The detail of the cat surveying this pastoral scene in the foreground is exquisite, with its arched back like that of the cats Paul Ranson was so fond of portraying. The ecstatic sway of the hips of the woman in mauve, an archetypal figure



E. V., sketch for *Women in the Garden*, charcoal heightened with pastel on paper, 74 x 51 cm. Private collection.

of rapture in the work of Vuillard and of most of the Nabis around this time (see ill.); the tracery of the vegetation covered with an all but invisible golden rain; the elated



E. V., sketch for *Women in the Garden*, charcoal on paper, 31.3 x 24.1 cm. Private collection.

attitudes of the young girls hiding in the enchanted groves – all these details link *Women in the Garden* with some of Mau-



Pierre Bonnard, *The Croquet Game*, 1892, oil on canvas (detail). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

rice Denis' work of the early 1890s, especially *April* and *July*. If in his youth Vuillard had cast an idealistic, yet profane, eye upon the world, here he studiously composes his most accomplished Symbolist work. One last detail: it will hardly come as a surprise to learn that Vuillard's final experience with the theatre would precisely be to design the scenery for a production of Giraudoux's *Le Cantique des cantiques* at the Comédie-Française in 1938 (XII-149).

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Denis, *Four Panels for a Young Girl's Room*, 1891-92, oil on canvas: [September] 38 x 61 cm, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; [October] 38 x 61 cm, Collection of Mr and Mrs Arthur Altschul; [April] 37.5 x 61 cm, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo; [July] 30 x 60 cm, Fondation Rau pour le Tiers-Monde, Zurich.

<sup>2</sup> The Song of Songs 5, 6-9, *The New English Bible*, Oxford, 1970, p. 803.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Fort, *Mémoires*, Paris, 1944, pp. 34-37.

<sup>4</sup> I owe this detail to the perspicacity of Mr Waring Hopkins (February 1999), whom I gratefully acknowledge here.

### III-32

#### The Intruder (study)

1891

Oil on cardboard, 27.5 x 60.5 cm

Signed, lower right: E. Vuillard

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris, c. 1956 – Lefevre, London – Private collection, London, 1963 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 26 Oct. 1994, lot 5 (col. ill.) – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 91 – London, Lefevre, Feb.-March 1960, no. 33 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, p. 143, fig. 47 – Cogeval 2002, p. 36.

**Description:** *Figures beneath a lamp, grouped round a table to the left. The only coloured area in the composition is the moonlit sky above a row of trees glimpsed through an opening in the background (although some green touches are visible on the dress of the woman with the haggard expression, in the centre). The scene is less painted than sketched with a brush and turpentine.* (JS)



III-32

### III-33

#### The Intruder

1891

Oil on cardboard, 28 x 60.5 cm

Signed and dated, lower right: E. Vuillard / 91

Inscribed on rear: *Vuillard, 28 rue Pigalle*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Aurélien Lugné-Poe, Paris – Eugène Blot, Paris – Blot sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 9 and 10 May 1900, lot 168, 100 F – Pierre Picard, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 9 March 1955, lot 75 (ill.) – Cadby-Birch, New York – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Château National, 1891, no. 257.

**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, pp. 142-145, fig. 48 – Thomson 1988, p. 78, pl. 62 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 35 (ill.) – Cogeval, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1991-92, p. 122 (ill.). – Forgione 1992, p. 142, fig. 69 – Groom 1993, p. 13 – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Winterthur (Switzerland), 1999-2000, pp. 14-15 (ill.).



III-33



organiser of the soirée, remembers it clearly: 'Amid all the words pronounced by the Family assembled one evening around the lamp, there appeared a creature of anguish and terror: *one* who had not been invited, an impalpable, invisible one who was present in every gesture and gave a supernatural timbre to the voices'.<sup>2</sup> The grouping of the figures on the left is particularly interesting; it reminds one of the funereal atmosphere in an Edvard Munch (see ill.) and



Edvard Munch, *By the Death Bed*, 1895, oil on canvas, Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo.

concorde with the tone of contemporary descriptions of the performance, including hostile ones. As one critic observed, 'the theatre is plunged in darkness, even the stage is dark, except for a single lamp placed on a table. Three men and three young women come silently to sit around the table. They start talking, but in low voices, so low that it is impossible to catch an entire sentence, even from where I was sitting in the third row of the stalls'.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, decades ahead of Meyerhold, Tadeusz Kantor and Bob Wilson, Lugné-Poe had had the idea of immersing the entire theatre in pitch-black darkness so that the audience's perception would become only gradually accustomed to the irruption of light and sound.

Vuillard's composition presents a drama in a thoroughly Maeterlinckian vein, involving 'shivering beings lost in passive thoughts' who form a 'fearful, sombre harmony' with the decor.<sup>4</sup> And the feeling insinuates itself that Vuillard is using the theatre to explore what may be the dark side of a vicariously romantic, if not gothic, existence, and to settle a score with the changeless rhythms of family life. Moreover, he shares with the Belgian

dramatist an awareness of the 'infinite, brooding, hypocritically active presence of death'.<sup>5</sup> In Maeterlinck's play, the child is a 'child of wax', and the grandmother has no illusions about the fate of the newborn baby: 'I imagine he'll be deaf and perhaps dumb as well... That's what marriage between blood relations does for you...' Maeterlinck vividly evokes the ghostly presence of death in life: 'someone must have gone past the pond: the swans are frightened'. Scarcely more than a sketch, *The Intruder* casts its shadow over Vuillard's entire production of this period.

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, preface to the collected edition of his plays, *Théâtre*, I, Brussels: Lacomblez, 1901, § 1.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Fort, *Mémoires*, Paris, 1944, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Anonymous (but almost certainly Francisque Sarcey), *Le Temps*, 25 May 1891.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *op. cit.*, § 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, § 3.

### III-34 Theatre Scene (*L'Enfant prodigue*?)

c. 1890-91  
Oil on canvas, 43.8 x 61 cm  
Private collection



III-34

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Melanie Kahane, New York – Private collection – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 11 May 2000, lot 139 (col. ill.), bought in – Private collection.

**Description:** *Composition inspired by a scene from a play. In a symbolic forest rendered with small brushstrokes, six figures on the right appear to be illuminated by a spotlight, which also strikes a large bough. To the left is the silhouette of a tottering woman.* (JS)

Six women in stylised 1890s dresses are adumbrated in the background; one of them may be holding a child in her arms. One is tempted to view this composition as a depiction of a scene from Maeterlinck's *Les Aveugles* ('The Blind'), performed at the Théâtre d'Art on 11 December 1891. In the foreground, however, we see a young man (or child?) running, pursued by another figure, an episode not found in Maeterlinck's play. A number of Vuillard's drawings depict this same running figure (see ill.), linking it to the Pierrot in *L'Enfant prodigue* ('The Prodigal Son') by Michel Carré and André Wormser. This pantomime played an important role in the artist's Nabi period (see III-35). To keep the beautiful, extravagant Phrynette in style, Pierrot resorts to stealing.



E. V., sketch for *L'Enfant prodigue* (*The Prodigal Son*), charcoal on paper, 22 x 17.5 cm. Private collection.

Though this episode is mentioned only briefly in the stage directions ('He has stolen! Stolen once more! Just as his father used to do!'), in scene five of the second 'tableau' two constables come to arrest him; and, presumably, Félicia Mallet, who played the role of Pierrot, dragged out the action for dramatic effect. Vuillard may conceivably be depicting Pierrot here, with one of his victims or a constable in hot pursuit. An unpublished sketch by the artist sheds more light on the scene. In it, Pierrot, who has taken to stealing from the bourgeoisie, is seen throwing himself at his father's feet (see ill.).



E. V., *Pierrot-père Cursing Pierrot-fils in L'Enfant prodigue* (*The Prodigal Son*), 1890, India ink and graphite, 14.5 x 18.5 cm. Private collection.

<sup>1</sup> Michel Carré fils and André Wormser, *L'Enfant prodigue, pantomime en trois tableaux*, manuscript, Bibliothèque de l'Arse, Paris, pressmark M.RO (pantomimes).



Félicia Mallet in *L'Enfant prodigue* (*The Prodigal Son*), 1899, photograph. Private collection.

### III-35 Pierrot the Dreamer

1890  
Pastel and graphite on torn blue paper, 15 x 18 cm approx.  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

The melancholy, nocturnal Pierrot is linked to a group of watercolours that Vuillard dedicated to Félicia Mallet, famous for her mimes of Pierrot. An actress and singer from Bordeaux, Félicia Mallet achieved stardom subsequent to her appearance in the 'Soirées funambulesques', and became associated with Carré fils' and Wormser's *L'Enfant prodigue* ('The Prodigal Son'), staged by the Cercle Funambulesque at the Bouffes Parisiens on



A rehearsal at the Cercle Funambulesque. Salomon archives.



E. V., sketch from the '1890' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 13.5 x 10.5 cm. Private collection.

10 June 1890 (see ill.). She played the leading role of the young Pierrot. The plot was thin: 'Middle-class interior at the home of Monsieur Pierrot père... fat, red nose, cheerful expression. Madame Pierrot smiles at her husband, who gazes admiringly at her. Only Pierrot fils dreams and forgets to eat; his elbow on the table, he gazes out of the window.'<sup>1</sup> Needless to say, the young Pierrot is sick with love. He has fallen for the beautiful Phrynette, played by Biana Duhamel. He writes a madrigal for her: 'I love you to distraction. And I place my heart at your feet.' However, the latter's taste for luxury leads him to steal from his parents during the night, and his father curses him. Nor does the young lovers' happiness last very long: in order to settle an ever-growing mountain of milliners' bills, Pierrot takes to



III-35



robbing the bourgeois, whilst Phrynette yields to the moneyed advances of a rich baron. Abandoned by her and arrested by town constables, Pierrot finally returns to his parents' home, 'thin and ill-clad'. His repentance at last gains him parental pardon.

Simplistic though it was, the pantomime enchanted even the most seasoned critics, with Francisque Sarcey in the forefront: '[the second tableau] serves at the very least to show us the virtuosity of Mlle Félicia Mallet, who is an incomparable mime... She combines an exquisite feeling for truth with an ever lively fantasy...' She had a profound effect on Vuillard, too; the artist identified oddly with the bohemian, impulsive figure of Pierrot, the misunderstood son and hoodwinked lover. He made several watercolours of him, publication of which was mistakenly announced in 1891 as part of a volume by Hugounet, *Pierrot et Pierrots*. The expressionist effects of the pantomime no doubt accorded with Vuillard's striving for a true, Synthetist art.

In his fine project for a frontispiece bearing the actress' name (see ill.), Vuillard took advantage of the fact that the protagonist was a woman playing a male role; he even pushed the provocation as far as giving her face the appearance of a bloodless mask with a diabolic smile. His Félicia Mallet is truly *lunaire*, dreamy, an expressionist icon that anticipates the Schönbergian model by two decades and gives us a glimpse of the artist's troubled sensuality. As for *Pierrot the Dreamer*, it can be seen as a modern, Synthetist and mechanistic version of the Bovaryism that was widespread throughout the entire nineteenth century.

<sup>1</sup> Carré fils and Wormser, *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Le Temps*, article by Francisque Sarcey, 26 June 1890.

### III-36.1 and III-36.2

#### *La Farce du pâté*

##### Three-panel theatre set

1892

Gouache on cardboard, left-hand panel [1]: 98 × 62 cm; central panel [2]: 100 × 103 cm; the right-hand panel [3] has been lost.

Musée Départemental Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré', Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France), PMD.980.9.4

**Provenance:** Georges Coulon, Paris – Jean-Claude Coulon, Paris – Musée Départemental Maurice Denis 'Le Prieuré', Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1980.

**Exhibitions:** Vienna, Institut Français, 1949, no. 45 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 296.

**Bibliography:** Humbert 1954a, pp. 109-110, pl. 44 – Du Colombier 1955, p. 504 (ill.) – Aitken 1978, pp. 20, 208 – Mauner 1978, p. 94 – Exhib. cat., Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1980, no. 2 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, p. 273 – Forgiione 1992, fig. 82.

A sixteenth-century comedy 'rendered in modern verse by Grassies des Brulies', the *Farce du pâté et de la tarte* ('The farce of the

potted meat and the tart') was published by Delagrave with illustrations by Jean Geoffroy in 1888. It was staged by the Nabis as a puppet play with Maeterlinck's *Les Sept Princesses* ('The seven princesses') at the home of Georges Coulon, a senior member of the Conseil d'État, on 10 April 1892.

The style of the set is surprising, as it is painted in a neo-medieval vein seldom employed by Vuillard and is, at any rate, less 'Nabi' in spirit than the fine programme designed by Ranson (see ill.). According to Agnès Hum-



Paul Ranson, frontispiece of the programme of *La Farce du pâté*, 1892, lithograph. Musée Départemental Maurice Denis, Saint-Germain-en-Laye.



III-36.1



III-36.2

bert, the set was 'executed in a hurry, in front of France Ranson, who was very impressed... The backing is a simple piece of packaging cardboard'. One readily imagines the contrast between the picaresque earthiness of the dialogues in *La Farce du pâté* and the markedly diaphanous tone of the *Sept Princesses*, which preceded it on the programme. In fact, this corner of medieval Paris resembles, in only slightly more stylised mode, any theatre set of the period, and is a proof of Vuillard's skill in adapting to changing circumstances.

### III-37

#### *Nude in a Cave*

c. 1890-91

Oil on canvas, 32 × 21 cm

Stamp 3, lower left

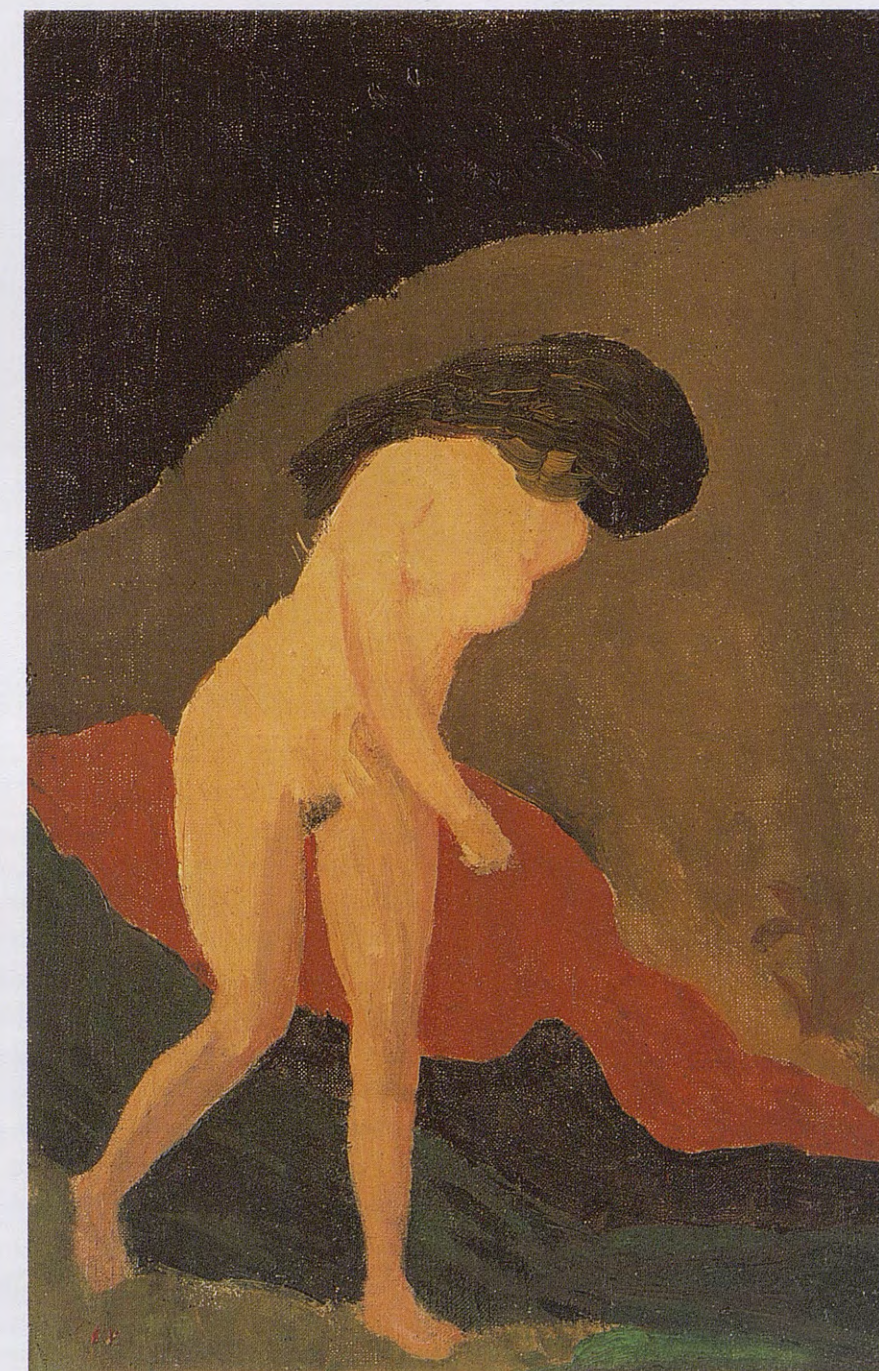
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arnoé, Paris – Jan Krugier, Geneva – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 6 Dec. 1979, lot 572 – Sale, Galerie Koller, Zurich, 15 May 1981, lot 5153 – Albert Loeb and Jan Krugier, New York – Weintraub, New York – Private collection, Chicago (Illinois), 1983 – Sale, Christie's, New York, 13 May 1992, lot 206 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Christie's, New York, 13 May 1993, lot 136 (col. ill.) – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Geneva, Krugier, 1969, no. 88 (ill.).

This is without question the young Vuillard's strangest nude; it is not a study of a model in the artist's studio, but a woman walking in what seems to be a cave by the sea. The Synthetist style of the work and the *cloisonniste* areas of flat colour behind the woman in the manner of Maurice Denis link it to the *Schematized Portrait of Julien Magnin* (II-26) and *Lilacs* (II-28). Concealed by her hair, the figure's face is once again turned away, an attitude equivalent in Vuillard's work at this juncture to an expression of suffering and shame. It would be tempting to see her as Mélisande

searching for her ring in the depths of the sea that is gnawing away at the kingdom of Allemonde, were it not for the fact that in 1890-91 Maeterlinck had yet to write *Pelléas et Mélisande*. On the other hand, in November 1891, Vuillard was involved in the production of *Berthe au grand pié* (see III-30); he appears to have been moved by the misfortune of the princess wrongly accused of adultery and banished, naked, to an inhospitable forest. *Nude in a Cave* may be a variant on this age-old fable, which came into fashion again in the Symbolist era. Or is it, instead, a preliminary jotting for a Théâtre-Libre frontispiece (see III-29)?



III-37



## III-38

## Scene from an Ibsen Play

c. 1893  
Pastel on paper, 30 × 25 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Bibliography:** Eckert Boyer 1998, pp.101, 103 (ill.).

**Description:** *A strange motif. Two figures slightly to the left of centre – a woman in a rust-coloured skirt and white blouse, seated on a bench, and a man in bluish-grey standing in front of her – are seen in what appears to be the glare of footlights. Behind this pair is a white fence against a green background shading into cranberry red, with a row of trees on the right. Looming in the foreground are a couple of curious black silhouettes, the one on the right suggesting a hooded cape. A mauve patch on the left and, on top, a grey arabesque.*

The fairly strict dress of the early 1890s, the simple furnishings, the rather stiff attitudes of the figures and, above all, the white fence so characteristic of Scandinavian land-



Edvard Munch, *Moonlight*, c. 1893, oil on canvas, Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo.

scapes – one has only to recall Munch's famous *Moonlight* (see ill.) – clearly evoke an Ibsen play, perhaps *The Lady from the Sea*<sup>1</sup> (the final dialogue between Ellida and Wangel: 'I now see only one way to save you. I will give you back your freedom.'), or, more likely, *Rosmersholm*, for which Vuillard designed the sets (see ill.).<sup>2</sup> The silhouette of the winged sphinx, if that is what it is, profiled against the stage and intruding on our view of the actors, may represent the 'pale horses' of death that bear away



III-38

Rosmer and Rebecca in the symbolic close of Act IV. To a greater extent than anywhere else in his work for the theatre, Vuillard gives us here a sort of summary of how he proposes to organize a décor; we can almost picture the battens stretching the green curtain taut behind the actors. Clearly, this pastel is a working sketch intended to help Lugné-Poe stage one of his productions.

<sup>1</sup> Presented on 16 Dec. 1892 at the Théâtre Moderne.

<sup>2</sup> Presented on 6 Dec. 1893 at the Bouffes du Nord.

## III-39

## The Mask

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 22 × 25.2 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Description:** *Two Dantesque silhouettes against a red-dish-brown background: a man in black with a white collar gazing at a woman wrapped in pink and beige gauze, her face concealed behind a white mask.* (JS)



III-39

## III-40

## Marthe Mellot in Blue

c. 1891-92  
Oil on hardboard, 27 × 11 cm  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Alfred Athis Natanson, Paris – Private collection, Paris – Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris, 2002.

**Exhibitions:** Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 15 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 10 (ill.) – Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 61 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1972, no. 879.

**Bibliography:** Mauner 1978, p. 201, fig. 44 – Cifa 1985, pp. 289–290, fig. 150.

**Description:** *The figure, who is seen lifting her ultramarine dress, is portrayed in a somewhat exaggerated attitude against a pinkish background with a swath of black along the top and an area of yellow below. The ribbon on her voluminous, wide-brimmed hat is the same ultramarine as her dress, hair and eyes.* (JS)

Vuillard sketched Marthe Mellot with Lugné-Poe in a caricature in his *Discours de déclamation au Conservatoire* (a formal declamation at the drama school to which the two actors hoped to be admitted). Like Suzanne Després, Berthe Bady and Georgette Camée, Marthe Mellot was an inspiration for Lugné-Poe during his Symbolist period – his 'Vénus de Mel-lot',<sup>1</sup> as his fellow students nicknamed her. She performed in Édouard Dujardin's trilogy, *Antonia*, and, in May 1895 played the part of Asta in Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*, followed, in June of

that same year, by that of Agnes in *Brand*. She was particularly accomplished at adapting her voice to the hauntingly monotone style of delivery favoured by Lugné-Poe. Vuillard renders her in strokes of lustrous ultramarine, after the



Félix Vallotton, *Marthe Mellot*, 1898, oil on canvas, Kunsthau, Zurich.

Japanese manner, as he had earlier sketched Biana Duhamel. The artist caricatures her face, perhaps meaning to portray her as the 'pruneau électrique' that Francisque Sarcey called her in one of his rare flashes of inspiration.<sup>2</sup> Married to Alfred Natanson (known as Alfred Athis) in 1901, she accompanied Vuillard in his travels with the Hessels; she was also Annette Vailant's mother. In her memoirs, *Le Pain polka*, Annette recounts her parents' meeting: 'One day Vuillard, costumier of Symbolist tunics, took mother along to *La Revue Blanche* on the rue Laffitte. That was how... my future father, the youngest of the Natanson brothers, came to meet the youthful actress, Marthe Mellot, and to marry her... Subsequently, they made a wonderful journey together in Russia, from

the Neva to the Black Sea, St. Petersburg to Odessa. One night – together, they would sometimes mention it when I was still a child, gazing into each other's eyes as they recalled that magic vision – an unknown Russian coachman drove them a great distance to see the sun come up over the Caucasus.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Punning on the name of the famous *Vénus de Milo* in the Musée du Louvre in Paris.

<sup>2</sup> 'Electric prune' was the sobriquet given the actress as a result of her ebullient manner on stage and expressive face.

<sup>3</sup> Vaillant 1974, p. 75.



III-40



### III-41

#### Marthe Mellot

c. 1891-92  
Oil on wood, 22 × 17 cm  
Stam 3, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Alfred Athis Natanson, Paris – Private collection, Paris – Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris, 2002.

**Exhibition:** Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 14.

**Description:** A caricature on a panel that has the hue and sheen of bluish ivory. The actress is clad in a high-necked black dress and toque. The eyebrows and eyes are a very dark black, while the face is rendered in a slightly creamier tone than the background. Grey floor with a dash of blue at lower left. (JS)

### III-42

#### Marthe Mellot in Profile

c. 1891-92  
Pastel on paper, 26.5 × 20.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: E.V.  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Alfred Athis Natanson, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Description:** A caricature. The face, with its large black eye, is tinged with yellow. The model wears a

blue bolero with a high collar over a yellow corslet. Her hair is brown and surmounted with a black toque. Beige curtain to the right. (JS)



III-41



III-42



III-43

### III-43

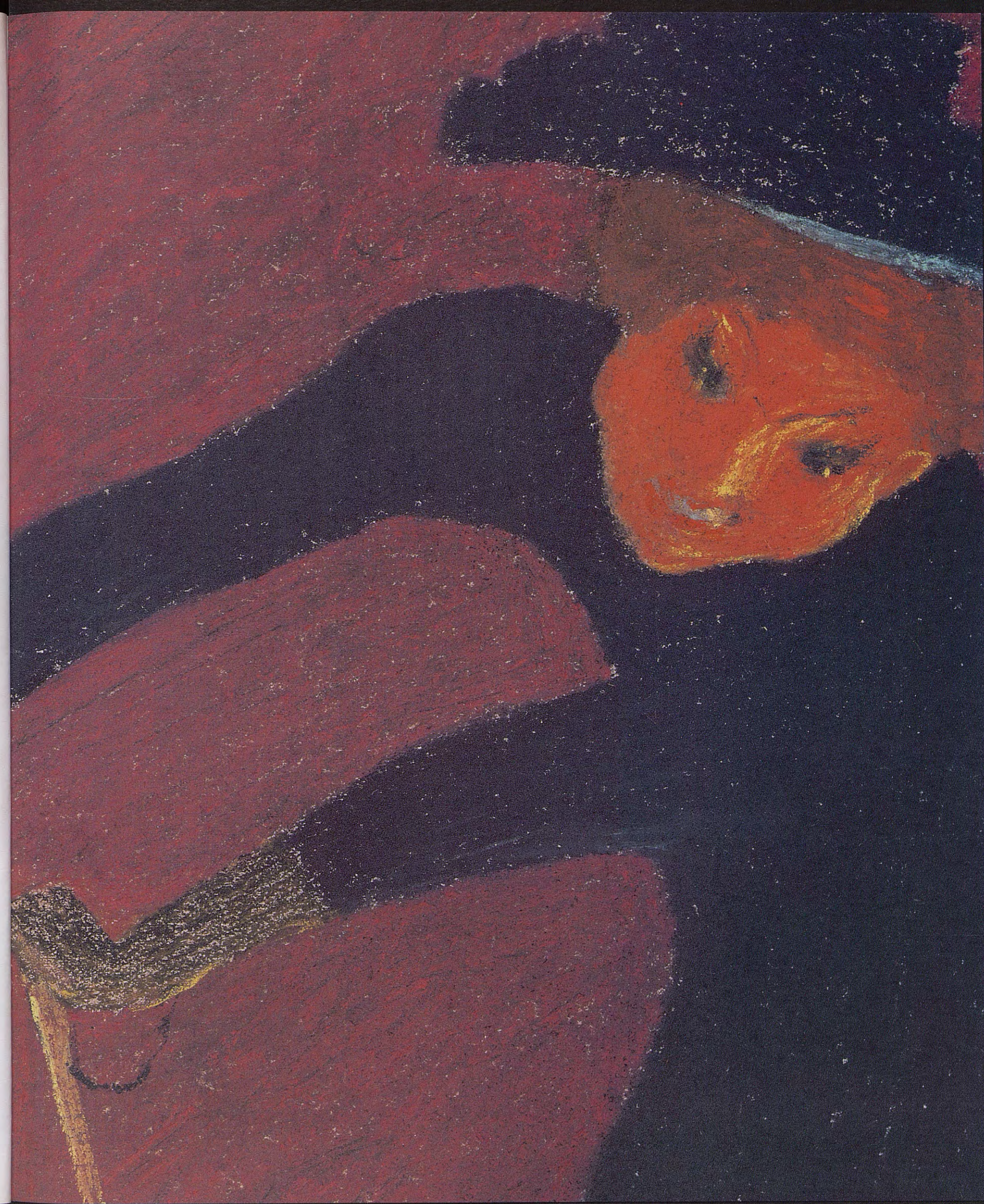
#### Marthe Mellot

c. 1891-92  
Pastel, charcoal and gouache on paper, 24.2 × 16.3 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Private collection, Paris – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris.

**Exhibition:** St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 106, p. 145 (col. ill.).

The actress is not wearing an ancient Greek *peplos*, as was long thought to be the case, but a lady's bed jacket, perhaps to protect her dress while she arranges her hair.







### III-1 Biana Duhamel in the Role of Miss Helyett

c. 1891-92  
Pastel on paper,  
42 x 26 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Joseph Rosensaft, New York, c. 1958 – Rosensaft sale, Sotheby's, New York, 17 March 1976, lot 21, bought in – Rosenthal and Rosenthal, New York – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 122 – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 217 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 297 – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1958, no. 27 – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 5 (ill.) – University Park, The Pennsylvania State University,

1968, no. 19 – New Brunswick (New Jersey), The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1988, no. 156, col. pl. 43 – Lyons-Barcelona, 1990-91, no. 26, p. 136 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, p. 39, no. 6 (ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, pp. 47, no. 231, 50, col. fig. 25.

**Bibliography:** Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 119-120, fig. 73 – Aitken 1978, pp. 90, 285, fig. 38 – Mauner 1978, p. 201, fig. 45 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 289-290, fig. 149 – Eckert Boyer, exhib. cat., New Brunswick, 1988, p. 24 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 33 (ill.) – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, p. 138 – Forgione 1992, pp. 72-73, fig. 44 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 47 (col. ill.).

**Description:** Against a luminous lemon-yellow background, a singer in a long blue dress and hat is shown in a contorted posture above a row of bright red footlights. (JS)

Several critics of *La Revue Blanche*, Romain Coolus foremost among them, displayed a marked hostility towards *Miss Helyett*, a vulgar operetta by Bouderon and Audran that, needless to say, found favour with Francisque Sarcey. A number of laboured witticisms from the text did the rounds of Paris, and Erik Satie raved, among other things, about the appalling '*a la disposición de Usted*', even borrowing it as a spoof dynamic indication for *Croquis et agaceries d'un gros bonhomme de bois*. Céline subsequently mentioned the show in *Death on the Installment Plan*: 'Many changes had taken place since I had left, in the Passage des Bérésinas, in the shop windows, everywhere... People were going in for the "Modern Style", for lilac and orange tones... Morning glories and irises were all the rage then... Two perfumeries and a seller of gramophones had opened shop... The same old photographs were displayed at the door to our theatre, the "Grenier Mondain"... the same old posters in the wings. *Miss Helyett* was still running, and still with the same tenor: Pitaluga... A ravishing voice. Every Sunday he regaled his female admirers at the elevation at Notre-Dame-des-Victoires... The "Minuit Chrétien" he crooned at Saint-Eustache was the talk for twelve months in all the boutiques in the Passage... That Christmas Pitaluga! ... Each year, it was more thrilling, more spirited, more supernatural...' <sup>1</sup> *Miss Helyett*, which opened in

November 1890 at the Bouffes Parisiens, tells the story of a clergyman's daughter infused with Puritanism, who when confronted with the harsh realities of life, strives valiantly to abide by her father's stern principles. Clad in a Salvation Army uniform, she regularly consults a volume of paternal exhortations, which she keeps in a sort of pouch hanging from her belt. This situation, which smacks of light comedy, inspires Vuillard to produce an original image, a rhythmic figure that is a reworking of certain models from Japanese dance. As Ursula Perucchi-Petri points out, its characteristic S-shape derives from Japanese prints. 'Woodcuts of Japanese women mostly show clothed figures. Their movements are revealed chiefly by the folds of their attire. Their S-shaped lines and elaborate postures impart a charming momentum and an expressive contour to the garment, which also serves to convey the emotions of the idealised woman; for in the art of *ukiyo-e* the face is invariably expressionless. Lines – those of the garment's folds, hems and flaps – are the only means employed to enliven the figure.'

In Vuillard's composition, the singer is oblivious to her body, which is transformed into a sort of dynamic calligraphy, a timeless image in vivid colours and a perfect expression of the painter's most audacious experiments towards 1890. Combining elegance (the bank of red footlights condensed into a winding line) with wit (the marble-like eyes of the chanteuse), the Vuillardian figure exists solely as *gesture*. One is reminded of Mallarmé's poetic observations concerning Loie Fuller – another muse of the time – and the space mapped out by dance: 'When, as the curtain rises in a gala hall or any other premises, the dancer appears, like a furious wisp – blown in from where? – the floor, shunned by her leaps or hard beneath her toes, gains an undreamt-of virginity of place, which the figure isolates, will build up and bring to flower.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Céline, *Mort à crédit*, Paris, Férenczi, 1935; repub. Paris, Gallimard, 1993, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *Crayonné au théâtre*, in *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, Gallimard, 1945, p. 308.



### III-2 Biana Duhamel in *Miss Helyett*

c. 1891  
Pastel on paper, 41 x 18.5 cm  
Signed, lower centre: *E Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Current whereabouts unknown.





III-3

### III-3 The Striped Dress

c. 1890-91  
Oil on cardboard, 36 × 32 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Purchased from the artist's studio by Mme Francine Legrand-Kapferer, Paris – Banque

Lambert, Brussels – Galerie Berès, Paris – Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.

**Exhibition:** Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 8 (col. ill.).

Possibly a depiction of Biana Duhamel, whose bright eyes and broad smile are clearly recognizable. No longer shown performing on stage (see III-1), the singer is now attired in a simple summer dress with leg-of-mutton sleeves (since the time of the

Second Empire, striped clothing had been associated with the pleasures of holidays). However, she may also have donned the costume worn by Phrynette, the character with whom Pierrot falls in love in the pantomime *L'Enfant prodigue* by Michel Carré fils and André Wormser (1890, see III-34).

### III-4

#### Jane Avril with a Parasol

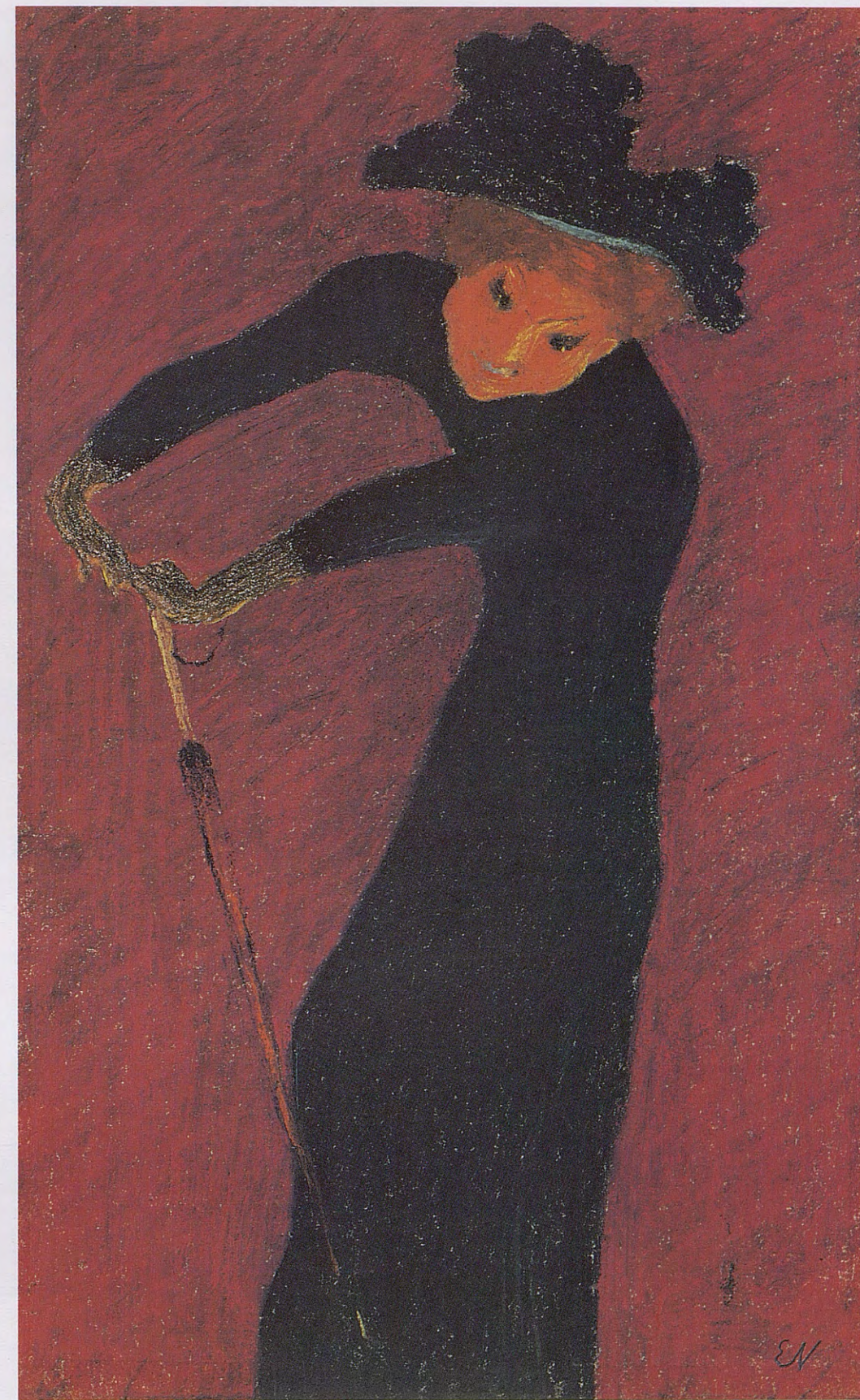
c. 1891-92  
Pastel on paper, 39.5 × 25 cm  
Signed, lower right: EV  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Ernest Coquelin Cadet, Paris – Coquelin Cadet sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 26 May 1909, lot 77 – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 17411) – Henry Bernstein, Paris, 31 August 1909 – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 90 [*Femme à l'ombrelle*, 1892].

**Description:** Wearing a long black dress and a large hat, the performer is presented in a contorted posture, thrusting out her parasol with her fingertips – an amusing gesture. Monochrome background. (JS)

Her figure comically gripped by convulsions, Jane Avril cavorts about against a monochrome Tyrian purple background. We recognize the cabaret artiste's red hair and tight black dress (a '*robe princesse*', forerunner of the sheath dresses of today), the same one that she wears in Toulouse-Lautrec's well-known poster of the Divan Japonais. With a Japanese-style twisting of the hands, she holds out a flimsy parasol. Faint yellow pastel highlights on her face, together with the green rim around her hat, betray the presence of footlights, lighting the picture from below. Vuillard may be depicting one of the choreographic improvisations she performed on stage at the Chat Noir. After sharing star billing with La Goulue in the celebrated *Naturalist Quadrille* at the Moulin Rouge, Jane Avril made a name for herself dancing solo at the Divan Japonais, the Décadents and the Jardin de Paris. Her explosive energy earned her the sobriquet '*la mélinite*' ('melinite'), as well as the ardent, unflagging devotion of such artists as Toulouse-Lautrec, Federico Zandomenighi and Vuillard. Better educated than her fellow cabaret performers, she was given the role of Anitra in Lugné-Poe's production of *Peer Gynt* in 1896, before meeting the journalist Maurice Biais and renouncing her bohemian ways. Soon forgotten, she died in 1943. Like Loie Fuller, she fascinated intellectuals. Maurice Joyant observed that 'she dances like a delirious orchid'.



III-4





III-5

### III-5 At the 'Divan Japonais'

c. 1890-91  
Oil on hardboard, 27 × 27 m  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Girard, Paris, 1950 – Wildenstein, New York – Carroll Carstairs, New York – Diane Esmond, New York and Paris, 1955 – Sale, Christie's, London, 30 Nov. 1981, lot 18 (col. ill.) – Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Parvillée, 1943, no. 74 [*Au Divan japonais*] – Paris, Charpentier, 1948 (not in cat.) – Paris, Charpentier, 1948-49, no. 230 –

Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 2 [*Le Divan japonais, Yvette Guilbert chantant*] – New York, 1954, p. 101 [*'Au Divan Japonais'. Profile of Yvette Guilbert*] – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1955, p. 21 – London, Gibson, 1987, p. 18 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 25, p. 57 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 234 (col. ill.) – Florence, 1998, no. 5, p. 44 (col. ill.); and Montreal, 1998, no. 159, p. 25 (col. ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 8, p. 84 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1945, p. 134 (ill.) – Chastel 1946, pp. 12 (ill.), 44 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 299-303, fig. 161 – Thomson 1988, p. 28, col. pl. 16 – Dumas, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, p. 58 – Thomson, exhib. cat., London and Paris, 1991-92, p. 204, fig. 250 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 9 (col. ill.), 47 – Cogeval, exhib. cat., Florence, 1998, pp. 44 (col. ill.), 180 and Montreal, pp. 25 (col. ill.), 115–116.

**Description:** *Yvette Guilbert at the Divan Japonais*, her mauvish profile standing out against a yellow fan and the oriental decor in the background. She is clad in an orange-and-black blouse with ample puffed sleeves. The figure, rendered in flat tones, is linked by a dazzling arabesque to the richly variegated background. (JS)

One of Vuillard's most disconcerting paintings, this composition remains something of an enigma. Are we seeing a female spectator gazing up in astonishment at a cabaret performance, or a singer exerting herself on stage? And if we opt for the sec-



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Yvette Guilbert Taking Applause*, 1894, charcoal heightened with turpentine diluted colour. Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi.

ond solution, who is the singer? Jane Avril or Yvette Guilbert? The fan she holds in her gloved hand, and the hint of a feathered hat secured by ribbons behind the ears, certainly bring to mind the costume worn by Jane Avril in Toulouse-Lautrec's poster for the *Divan Japonais*. Yet, even if this is a ruthlessly exaggerated and stylized profile, we are hard put to discern Jane Avril's somewhat pronounced and distinguished-looking jaw, a trait so characteristic of the dancer that Toulouse-Lautrec never failed to portray it (see ill.). What we do recognize, on the other hand, are the prominent cheekbones, the turned-up nose and, especially, the protruding chin that accentuated the comical expressions of Yvette Guilbert's singing. Jane Avril, moreover, seldom sung on stage. What



E. V., *Study Sheet with Different Views of Yvette Guilbert*, pastel on paper, recto-verso, 25 x 31.1 cm. Private collection.



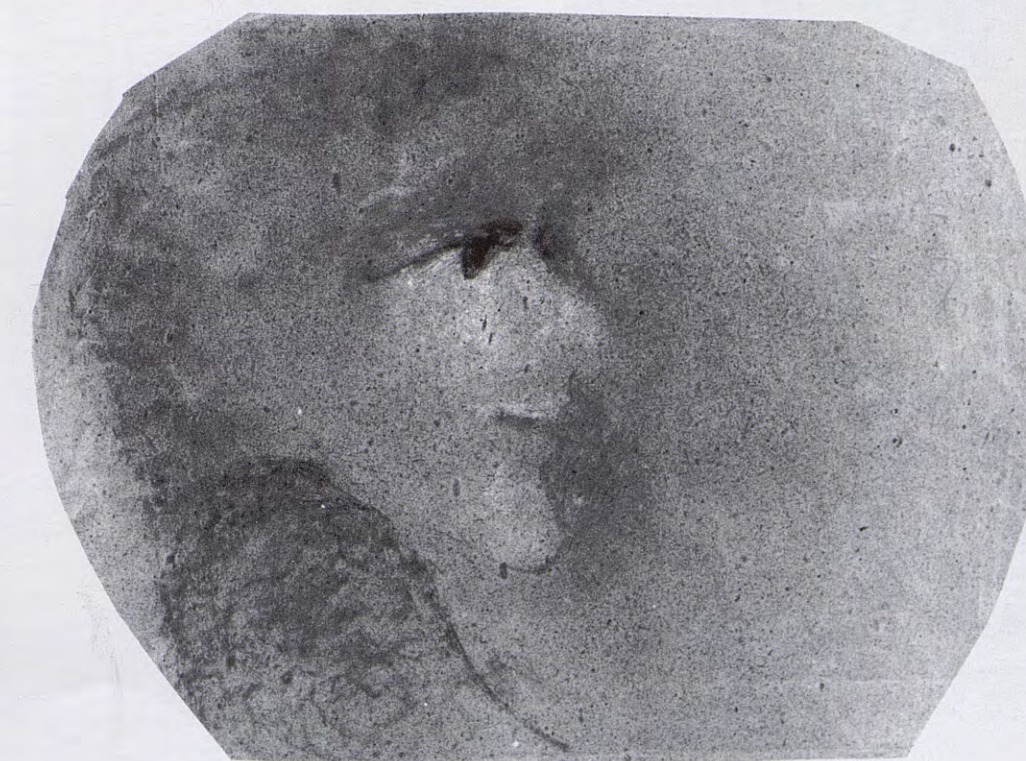
Yvette Guilbert, photograph of the 1880s.

composition the artist focuses squarely on the singer, placing her in front of a stage-set whose precise location in space is difficult to make out, as in some of Toulouse-Lautrec's paintings. Against this almost pointillist background the singer with her 'tipsy moon' profile appears to glide past, bearing her secret with her.

### III-6 Woman in Profile

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 25.5 × 35 cm  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.



III-6





III-7

### III-7 Fashionable Lady at a Café-Concert

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 23 × 22.7 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection, Germany

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Kunsthandel Sabine Helms, Munich – Private collection, Germany.



III-8

### III-8 Singer

c. 1890-91  
Pastel and charcoal on paper,  
25.5 × 28.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 9 March 1967, lot 24 (ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Head of a young woman with black hair and lively eyes, wearing a sort of lace ruche. Touched up with brown along the contours. Green background. (AC)



III-9

### III-9 The Leg-of-Mutton Sleeve

c. 1890-91  
Oil on cardboard, 21.5 × 18.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hammer, New York – Knoedler, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 3 June 1970, lot 53 (ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Tokyo, Nichido, Oct. 1970, no. 10 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** *Art News* 55, May 1956, p. 56 (ill.).

**Description:** A young woman wearing a low-necked white blouse with yellow ribbons, tilting her head to one side and smiling. Her voluminous 'leg-of-mutton' sleeve, trimmed with green and yellow, billows up on the left; its counterpart to the right is not visible, being cropped by the frame. Her blonde hair shades into the grey wall, which is tinged with green. A somewhat soft-focus composition. (AC)



III-10

### III-10 Young Woman Dancing

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 37.5 × 29 cm  
Signed and dedicated, lower right: *à mon cher ami / Lugné-Poe / E Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Aurélien Lugné-Poe, Paris – Sale, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 16 June 1959, lot 1 – Current whereabouts unknown.

### III-11 Woman in Red with Banner

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 43 × 32 m  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** The model is shown in a three-quarters view, her profile topped by a mass of red hair. Her bright red blouse stands out against the dark blue paper. A black line suggests the dress circle. (JS)

### III-12 Woman in Red Singing

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on cardboard, 34 × 24.5 cm  
Signed, lower left: *EV*  
**Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, 8574**

**Provenance:** Ernest Coquelin Cadet, Paris – Coquelin Cadet sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris 26 May 1909, lot 77 – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 17407) – Henry Bernstein, Paris, 31 August 1909 – Antonio Santamarina, Buenos Aires – Donation by Antonio Santamarina, 1975 – Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires.

**Bibliography:** Santamarina 1965, pp. 184-185 (ill.).

**Description:** The singer is shown in profile, with her back turned slightly and her left arm extended in a theatrical pose. A railing bisects the painting at hip height. (JS)



III-11



III-12





III-13

### III-13 The Theatre Loge

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 23 × 23 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection, Great Britain

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Jeffrey Archer, London – Private collection, Great Britain.

**Exhibitions:** London, JPL, Spring 1980, no. 11 (ill.) – Paddington, Stadia Graphics Gallery, 1981, no. 4 – Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 28 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 4.

### III-14 Woman at a Piano

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 19.5 × 23.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Private collection, Switzerland



III-14

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79, no. 24 (col. ill.).

### III-15 Young Woman in a Madder-Red Jacket

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 32 × 25 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alex Reid & Lefevre, London – Philip G. Goldberg, London, 1960 – Alex Reid & Lefevre, London, 1962 – Mrs Harry Sacher, London, 1963 – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** London, Lefevre, Oct.-Nov. 1960, no. 36 (ill.).

**Description:** Black hair, blue eyes and a madder-red jacket. The sitter is sporting a man's collar and a curious blue sailor-knot tie. The light tones of the face blend with the lemon-yellow background. (JS)



III-15



III-16

### III-16 Face of a Woman (Yvette Guilbert)

c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 36 × 25.2 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 101, p. 144 (col. ill.).

These are clearly Yvette Guilbert's features. The singer looks older here than in *At The 'Divan Japonais'*, yet judging by its style, this pastel drawing must date from the same period.



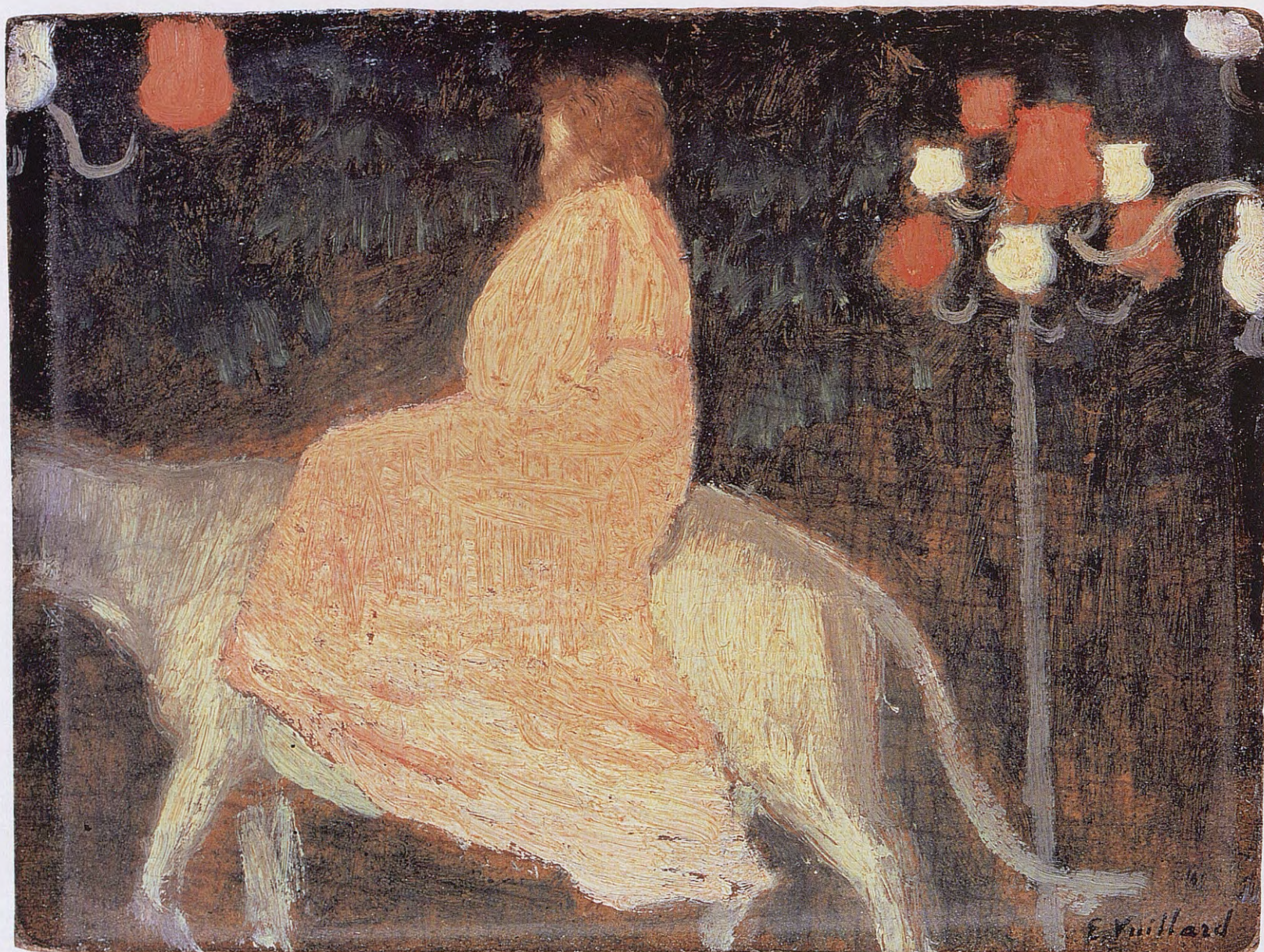
III-17

### III-17 Yvette Guilbert in Profile

c. 1890-91  
Pastel and charcoal on paper, 32.6 × 27 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.





III-18

### III-18 'Hell for Leather!' (*'À fond de train!'*)

c. 1891 (?)  
Oil on cardboard, 21 × 27.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris – Sam Salz, New York – William Goetz, Los Angeles (California), c. 1959 – Goetz sale, Christie's, New York, 14 Nov. 1988, lot 6 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Maratier, 1943, no. 74 – San Francisco (California), Legion of Honor, 1959, no. 64, (ill.).

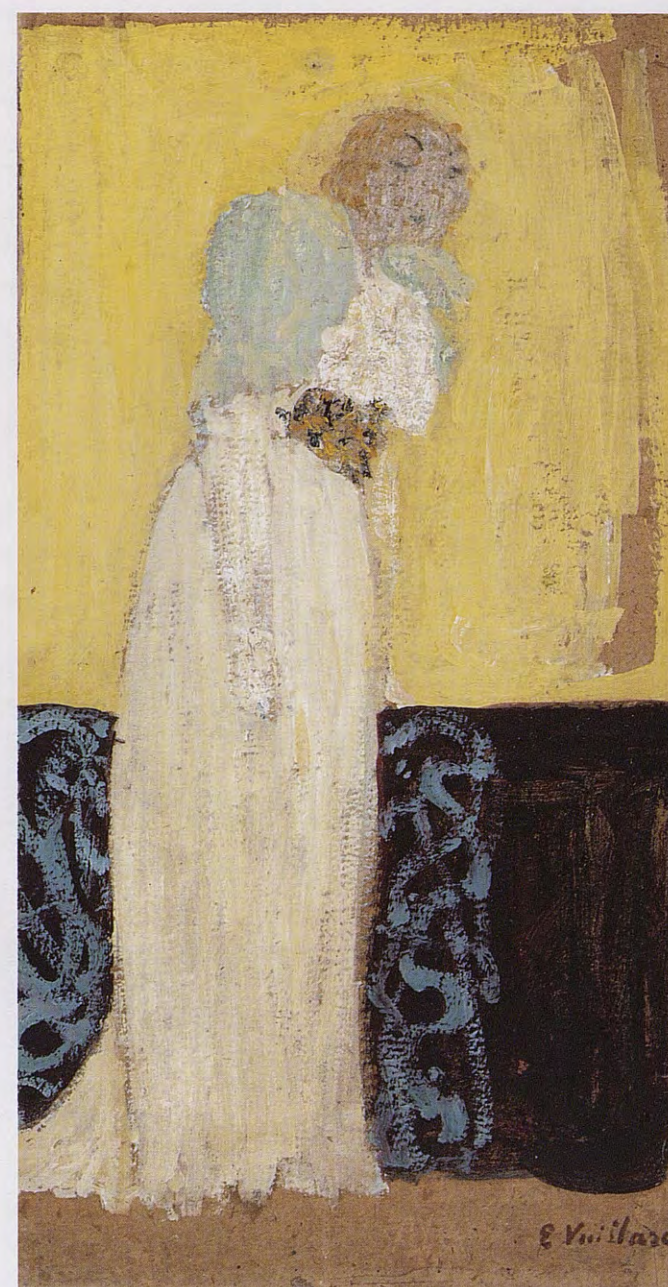
**Description:** A stout woman in a pink dress riding a grey donkey whose head is cropped by the frame. Background of dark foliage. Standard lamps with pink and white, tulip-shaped shades. (JS)

The 'enooormous'<sup>1</sup> comic effect of the Baudelairian giantess carried in triumph on the back of a donkey is a delight. As in *The Blue Vase* (V-109), one of the composition's chief elements – the animal's head – vanishes beyond the picture frame. The artist may be depicting a scene from a show arranged by the impresario, Gabriel Astruc, a farcical circus parade with Yvette Guilbert seated on the back of a white donkey (see VI-112). The act, whose title *'À fond de train!'* is itself a cue for laughter, was performed at the Nouveau Cirque at 251 rue Saint-Honoré, opposite Vuillard's building.

Astruc mentions it in his memoirs, *Le Pavillon des fantômes*: 'in 1891, we put on *À fond de train!* for Yvette Guilbert's debut in the circus. She arrived on stage... on a small white donkey, singing the kind of songs that are written for little girls. For Donval, anxious not to offend his clientele, had turned out to be a pitiless censor.'<sup>2</sup> The lamp in the foreground looks like the ones at the Moulin-Rouge, where Astruc also officiated throughout the 1890s. The scene was probably performed in several locations at the time.

<sup>1</sup> In French, 'hénaurné' instead of 'énorme'.

<sup>2</sup> Gabriel Astruc, *Le Pavillon des fantômes, souvenirs*, Paris, Grasset, 1929.



III-19

### III-19 The Redhead with Green Puffed Sleeves

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 29.8 × 15.9 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, New York

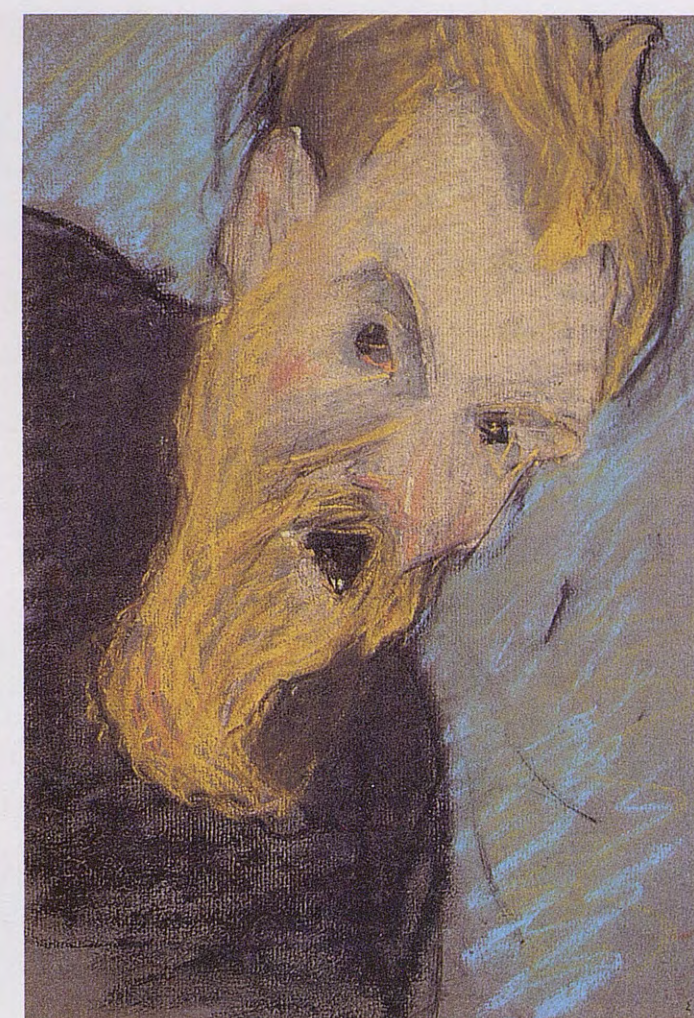
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Menneville, Paris – Silberman, New York – Edward Bragaline, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 14 Oct. 1965, lot 120 (ill.) – David Findlay Galleries, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 4 Nov. 1993, lot 130 (col. ill.) – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas, Paris – Private collection, New York.

**Description:** Against a bright yellow background and purple band decorated with blue motifs, a woman – Yvette Guilbert – in a white blouse with green puffed sleeves. Her hair is red and flat, and there is only the barest indication of the face. (AC)

### III-20 The Actor

c. 1891  
Pastel on paper, 30.5 × 22 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London, c. 1980 – Lucian Goldschmidt, New York



III-20

– Mrs Martin Atlas, Washington D.C., c. 1985  
– Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** London, JPL, Spring 1980, no. 5 – New Brunswick (New Jersey), The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1985-86, no. 172 (ill.).

This quick sketch has at times been identified as a portrayal of Félix Fénéon. But at the time Vuillard painted it (presumably around 1890), Fénéon was much younger than this ranting old man; there seems to be no good reason, therefore, to retain such an identification. Nothing proves, on the other hand, that the face is that of an actor, except perhaps the glare of the invisible footlights highlighting his grotesque vociferations.





III-21

### III-21 Coquelin Cadet as Scapin in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*

1890  
Pastel on paper, 23.5 × 16.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Art market, Munich (Germany)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Kunsthändler Sabine Helms, Munich.

**Exhibitions:** Bremen, Werner, 1983, no. 3 – Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 99, p. 52 (col. ill.) – Winterthur (Switzerland), Villa Flora, 2001-02, no. 60.

This pastel drawing should be seen in conjunction with the celebrated group of watercolours the artist painted for the actor Coquelin Cadet (Coquelin the Younger; see pp. 158-159). The composition possesses a disturbing originality. We instantly recognize the actor's feral grin and somewhat

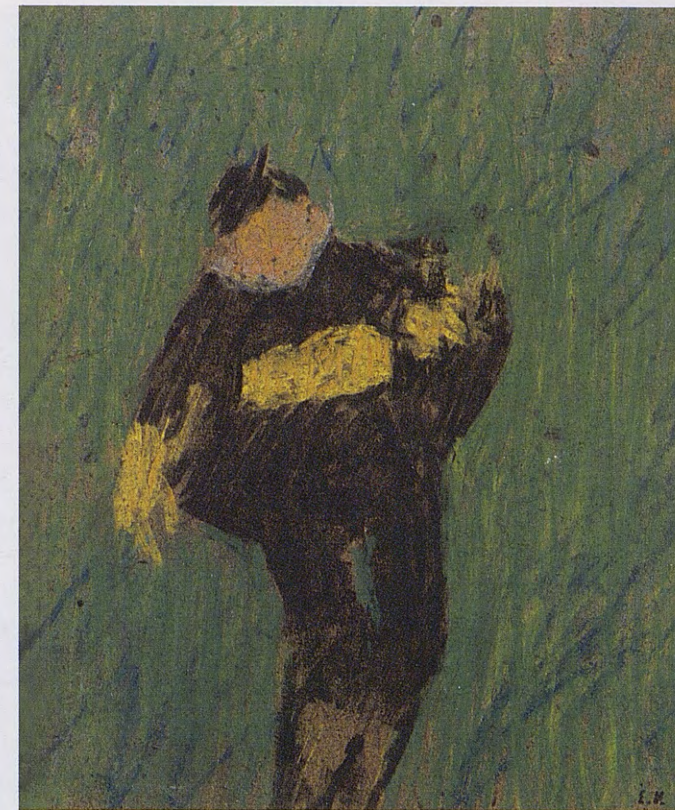
equine profile, used to best effect in his comic roles. Coquelin Cadet was a staunch supporter of Vuillard during the artist's Nabi period. His dressing-room was a miniature museum of the avant-garde art of 'his' favourite painters. In an article devoted to the actor's collection, Arsène Alexandre wrote in 1892: 'a quick look in the adjoining rooms shows us that Coquelin Cadet takes an interest, not only in the established painters we have just mentioned, but also in a more advanced art, which is for the time being still energetically contested. [Coquelin Cadet] has quite openly stated his great liking for a young artist hitherto known only to those who keep abreast of the most advanced artistic movements, Monsieur Édouard Vuillard... in some [of his] studies of private life, we note an extremely powerful and original use of colour; and in some of Coquelin Cadet's caricatures rendered with arabesques, a highly decorative and completely new imaginativeness.'<sup>1</sup> At the



Portrait photograph of Coquelin Cadet. Private collection.

sale of the actor's collection (Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 26 May 1909), Vuillard's celebrated group of watercolour portrayals of Coquelin Cadet was acquired by the Bernheim-Jeune gallery. Coquelin Cadet also owned *Bridge and Landing-Stage* (II-40), *The Boa* (II-72), *Jane Avril with a Parasol* (III-4) and *Woman in Red Singing* (III-12).

<sup>1</sup> Arsène Alexandre, 'Les collectionneurs. M. Coquelin Cadet amateur de peintres', *L'Éclair*, 21 July 1892.



III-22

### III-22 Coquelin Cadet as Crispin in *Les Folies amoureuses*

1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 20 × 17 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection, France

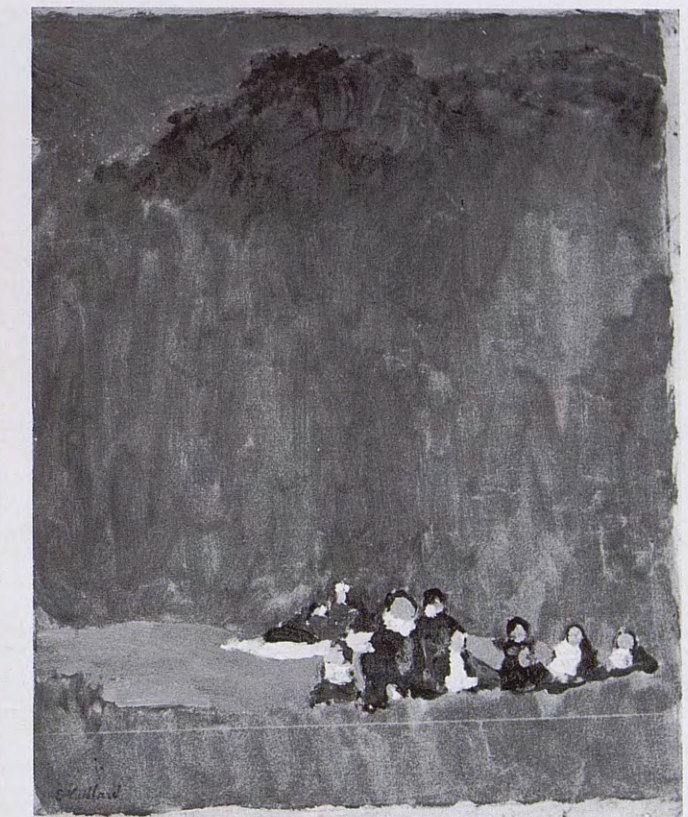
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection, France, 1999.

**Exhibitions:** London, JPL, 1985, no. 11 (col. ill.) – Salzburg, Salis, 1985, no. 14 (col. ill.) – Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 27 (col. ill.).

### III-23 Theatre Scene

c. 1890-91  
Oil on canvas, 40 × 33 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alex Maguy, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.



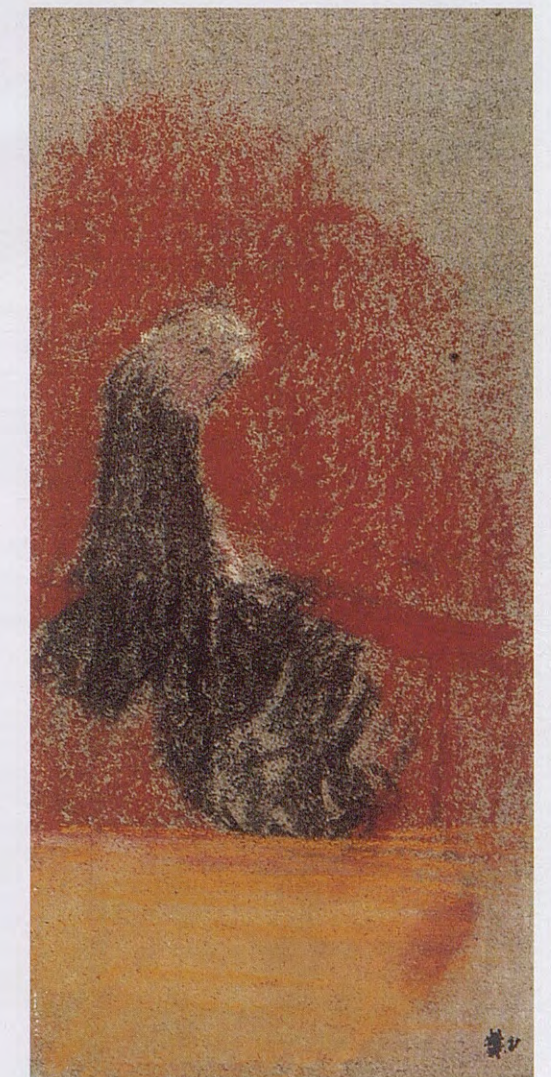
III-23

**Description:** Tiny figures, that seem to come straight out of the *Commedia dell'arte*, arrayed against a background of foliage bounded by an ultramarine sky. (JS)

### III-24 Character from a Play Seated against a Red Background

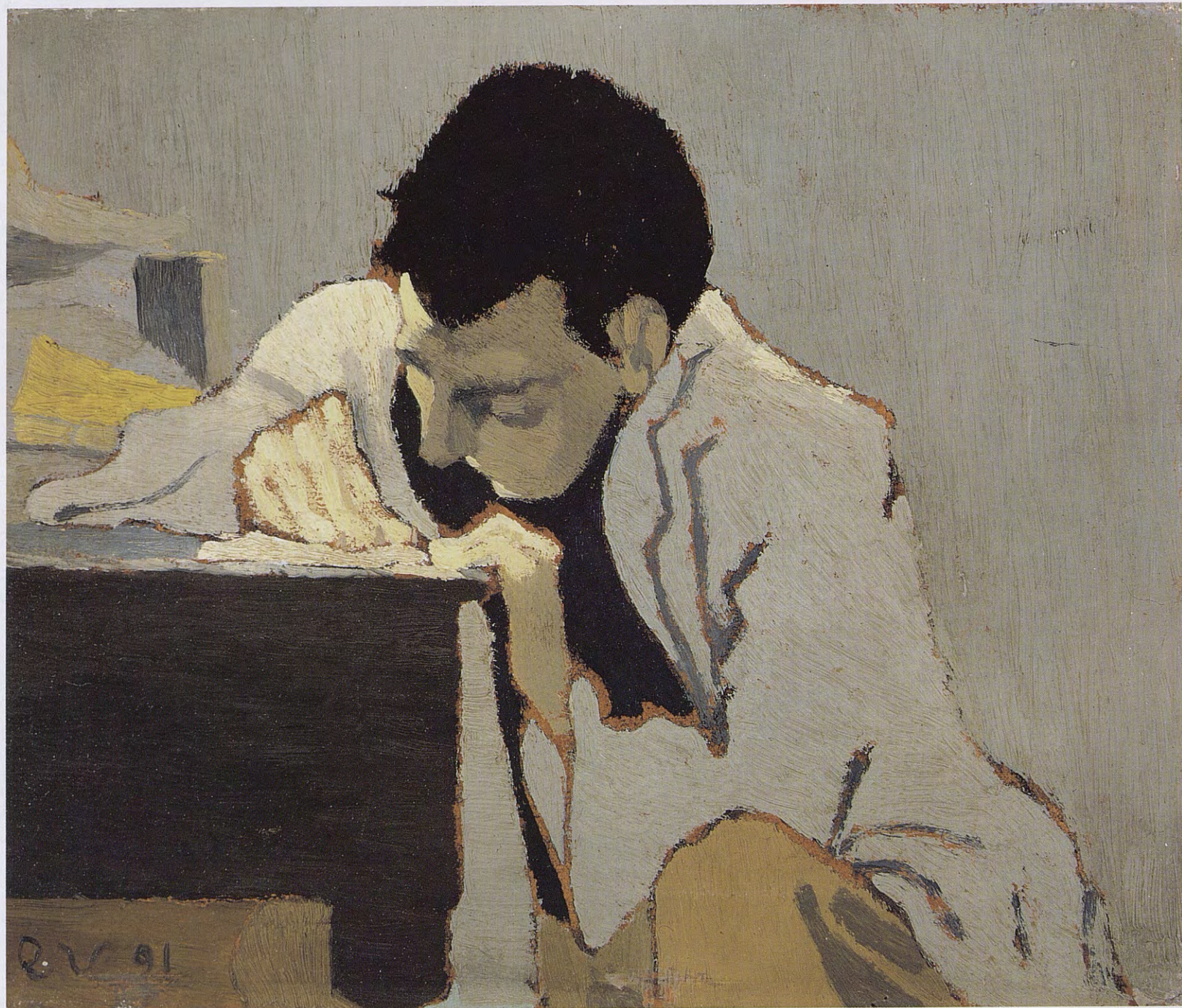
c. 1890-91  
Pastel on paper, 23.5 × 11.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Sale, Christie's, New York, 24 March 1992, lot 2 (col. ill.) – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 26 June 1995, lot 4 (col. ill.) – Private collection.



III-24





III-25

## III-25

## Portrait of Lugué-Poe

1891

Oil on cardboard mounted on hardboard,  
22.2 x 26.7 cmSigned and dated, lower left: *ev 91*Memorial Art Gallery of the University  
of Rochester (New York), Acc. no. 72.18Provenance: Aurélien Lugué-Poe, Paris – Étienne  
Bignou, Paris – Alex Reid & Lefevre, London,  
May 1928 – Knoedler, New York, Dec. 1928 –Miss Mabel Choate, New York and Stockbridge  
(Massachusetts) – Fletcher Steele, Pittsford (New  
York), 1928 – Fletcher Steele gift to the Memo-  
rial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester  
(New York), 1972.Exhibitions: Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, July–Sept.  
1893 – New York, Knoedler, Nov.–Dec. 1928,  
no. 52 (ill.) – Cambridge (Massachusetts), Fogg Art  
Museum, 1929, no. 99 (ill.) – New York, The Mus-  
eum of Modern Art, 1930, no. 97 – New York, The  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1934–35, no. 150 (ill.)  
– Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1935, no. 61 – New  
York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1939, no. 87  
(ill.) – New York, Seligmann, 1948, no. 3 – Min-  
neapolis (Minnesota), Institute of Arts, 1962,p. 149 (ill.) – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.–Nov.  
1964, no. 3 (ill.) – Toronto, 1971, no. 6 (ill.) –  
New York, Wildenstein, 1977, p. 78 (ill.) – Lon-  
don, Royal Academy, 1979–80, no. 234 (ill.) –  
Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1980,  
no. 148 (ill.) – New York, Wildenstein, 1983,  
p. 88 – Rochester, Memorial Art Gallery, 1984,  
no. 74 (col. ill.) – New Brunswick (New Jersey),  
The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1985–  
86, no. 173 – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1991–92,  
no. 33, p. 109 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993–94,  
no. 235 (col. ill.).Bibliography: *Revue encyclopédique*, no. 71,  
15 Nov. 1893, p. 647 (ill.) – Jewell and Crane  
1944, p. 183 (ill.) – Rewald 1956b, p. 488 (ill.)

III-44

## III-44

## Marthe Mellot

c. 1891–92

Oil on cardboard, 22 x 15.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Art market, Toronto (Ontario)

Provenance: Artist's studio – Seligmann, New York  
– Robert Woods Bliss, Washington D.C., c. 1948  
– John Butler, United States – Catherine Viviano,  
New York – Miriam Shiell Fine Art, Toronto,  
1994.Exhibition: New York, Seligmann, 1948, no. 2  
(ill.) [*Singer*, c. 1890].Description: *The actress is seen in profile, with her  
bare arms thrust back.* (JS)

## III-45

## Woman by a Small Window

c. 1891–92

Oil on cardboard, 28 x 22.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Georges Maratier,  
Paris, 1944 – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 21 April  
1950, lot 156 – Marlborough Fine Art, London  
– Mayor, London – Lefevre, London – Stephen  
Hahn, New York, 1960 – Private collection.Exhibitions: London, Marlborough, 1950, no. 13  
– London, Lefevre, 1959, no. 24 (ill.).

Bibliography: Ciaffa 1985, pp. 290–291, fig. 151.

Description: *A woman seen from behind in a dimly  
lit room, attired in dark blue, with smoothed, helmet-  
like hair. Her left hand rests on the bottom edge of  
an opening that forms a dazzling yellow square against  
which part of her head stands out sharply.* (AC)The barely discernible outline of a male  
presence to the right of the woman has led  
Patricia Ciaffa to identify the two figures in  
this composition as Suzanne Després and  
Lugué-Poe peering out at the stage through  
a small opening behind the scenery. For the  
moment, however, there is nothing to sup-  
port this beguiling interpretation, and the  
meaning of the scene remains somewhat  
enigmatic.





III-46

### III-46 The Goose

c. 1890-91  
Oil on cardboard, 22 x 27 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 6 (ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 5 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 6 (ill.) – Berlin, Haus am Waldsee, 1965, no. 51 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 16 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 13 – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 4 (ill.) – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 5 (col. ill.) – Tokyo-Osaka-Fujisawa, 1981, no. 87 (ill.) – Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France), Le Prieuré, 1982-83, no. 51 (ill.) – Paris, Grand Palais, 1983, no. 60 – Florence, 1998, no. 7, p. 46 (col. ill.); and Montreal, 1998, no. 161, p. 26 (col. ill.).

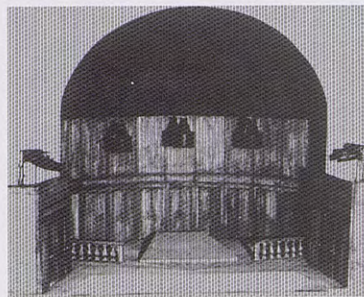
**Bibliography:** Barilli 1967b, p. 104 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 64 – Warnod 1988, p. 23 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 38 (col. ill.); and exhib. cat., Montreal, 1998, p. 116, no. 161.

The atmosphere of this painting is arguably even more dreamlike than that of the previ-

ous composition. We will most likely never know precisely what the two characters in purple capes and top hats (huntmen, grooms?) are doing on the uniformly green hillside; nor will we ever comprehend the goose insolently turning its back to them, or the black silhouettes (unlikely beaters in a farcical hunt?) standing out against the cloud-streaked blue sky. The flattened perspective brings to mind the artful simplicity of a medieval illumination. The field is like a tilted plane in a stage set, a theatrical innovation that Lugné-Poe attributes to Vuillard himself for his productions of Ibsen plays. The director particularly stresses his production of *The Master Builder*, staged, with Vuillard's scenery, on 3 April 1894 at the Bouffes du Nord: 'in the third act, the scene known as "The Dolls of Mrs Solness" was the cause of some protest. Vuillard, who was as fond of the play as Maeterlinck was, had designed a set of incomparable splendour... but when the spectators saw it they were aghast... It was the first time that anyone in France had dared to build a sloping stage, facing the public – it represented the terrace in front of the Solness home. Autumn foliage dwarfed the actors on this platform and their movements could be

made out clearly when they stood behind each other. Not a single face was hidden. The actors cannot have felt very much at ease, but what did it matter? They all complained but I stuck to my guns... Actually, it was already the platform used by Meyerhold for *The Revizor* (see ill.), that was recently seen in Paris.<sup>1</sup>

The distinct blue shadows on the grass, painted directly onto the support, and the copse to the left are also closely related to



Meyerhold, stage sets for *The Revizor* by Gogol, photograph, in *Les Voies de la création théâtrale*, Paris, Éditions du C.N.R.S., 1979.

stagecraft. Vuillard's lampooning of a rigid, starchy society directly foreshadows the vogue for caricature for which Bonnard and Jarry would later be renowned in their work relating to the *Ubu Roi* cycle, followed by Vallotton in his woodcuts, with their ruthless irony targeting the bourgeoisie and the forces of law and order. (Note, too, that the Chat Noir staged a shadow-puppet show in January 1891, called *Les Oies de Javotte*, a 'rustic' entertainment by Pille.) But compelling as this comparison may seem, we can be sure that Vuillard's *Goose* will preserve its mystery for a long time to come.

<sup>1</sup> Lugné-Poe 1931, p.74.

<sup>2</sup> The French title, *L'Oie*, may also be an oblique reference to the 'jeu de l'oie' parlour game, one square of which it might almost serve to illustrate.

### III-47 Man with Two Horses

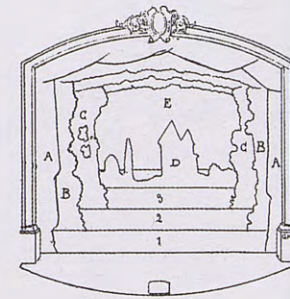
c. 1890  
Oil on cardboard, 27.5 x 35 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – E. J. Van Wisselingh, Amsterdam – B. Meijer, Wassenaar (Netherlands) – Josefowitz collection, 1985 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 110 – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 191 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 185 (ill.) – Mannheim (Germany), Kunsthalle, 1963-64, no. 306 – Tokyo, Wildenstein, 1974, no. 16 (ill.) – Lausanne (Switzerland), 2000-01, no. 7, p. 83 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Thomson 1988, p. 28, col. pl. 1 – Makarius 1989, pp. 63, 64 (col. ill.) – Boyle-Turner 1993, pp. 18-19 (col. ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 38-39 (col. ill.).

This fine pastoral composition is a harmonious blend of humour, nostalgia for old



View of a plantation from above, in *Trucs et Décors* by Georges Moynet (1888), reprint, Geneva, 1973.

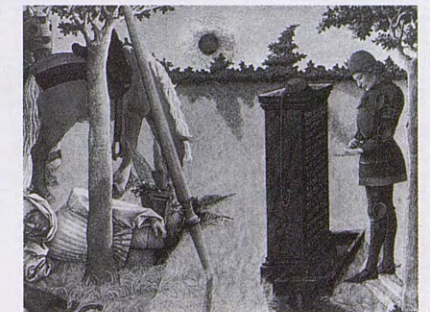
toys and a sort of wistful gaucherie. The trees framing the scene seem to have sprung from the vault of the church of Saint-Savin on the Gartempe. The monochrome background, from which all the light in the painting issues, is set round with scallops of vegetation in which blue vies with green. The division of space clearly derives from the techniques of stage design, in particular the practice of framing brightly coloured backdrops with darker-hued, rigid flats secured to the floor of the stage. The same division of space can be found in several works by Maurice Denis dating from 1890, including *Dapples of Sunlight on the Terrace*<sup>1</sup> and *Offering at Calvary*.<sup>2</sup> The figures resemble cardboard cut-outs manipulated by strings. The Javanese and Siamese puppet-shows presented at the Universal Exhibition of 1889 are known to have entranced Claude Debussy, Camille Claudel and Rodolphe Salis. Their flat puppets were back-lit against a monochrome background and were not all that different from certain forms of shadow play practised at the time. Vuillard was presumably familiar with them. In addition to these possible sources of inspiration, an important role must also have been played by Lemerrier de Neuville's 'Théâtre de



III-47

Pupazzi' rooted in Sicilian tradition. To the discerning of that time, the need for a return to puppet theatre was obvious – in the name of 'synthesis' – and foremost among those who campaigned on its behalf was Maeterlinck, who in 1890 informed *La Jeune Belgique*: 'Living beings may have to be removed from the stage entirely.'<sup>3</sup>

The result is one of Vuillard's most touching compositions, in which the painter harks back to a time-honoured proximity with nature, here represented by two placid horses. As with *The Goose* (III-46), one can guess at the painting's likely iconographic source in medieval illumination. A famous illustration for René d'Anjou's courtly romance *Le Cœur d'amour épris* (c. 1460) – for which the king himself, it was claimed, had painted the illustrations – depicts two knights, one of whom is sleeping while the other is reading with great gravity the inscription carved on a wishing-well; nearby are two horses. Though the book is preserved in Vienna, Maurice Denis must have been familiar with it, either from reproductions or through the facsimiles of Adolphe Braun. Moreover, in his Journal for December 1888 Vuillard notes: 'Went up to the Library, drawings from Vienna',<sup>4</sup> alluding to an exhibition of drawings from the Albertina collection on display at the Bibliothèque Nationale.



Master of the *Cœur d'amour épris*, *Cœur Reading the Inscription on the Magic Fountain*, c. 1460, parchment, 20.7 x 29 cm. Österreichische Bibliothek, Vienna, Ms. 2597.

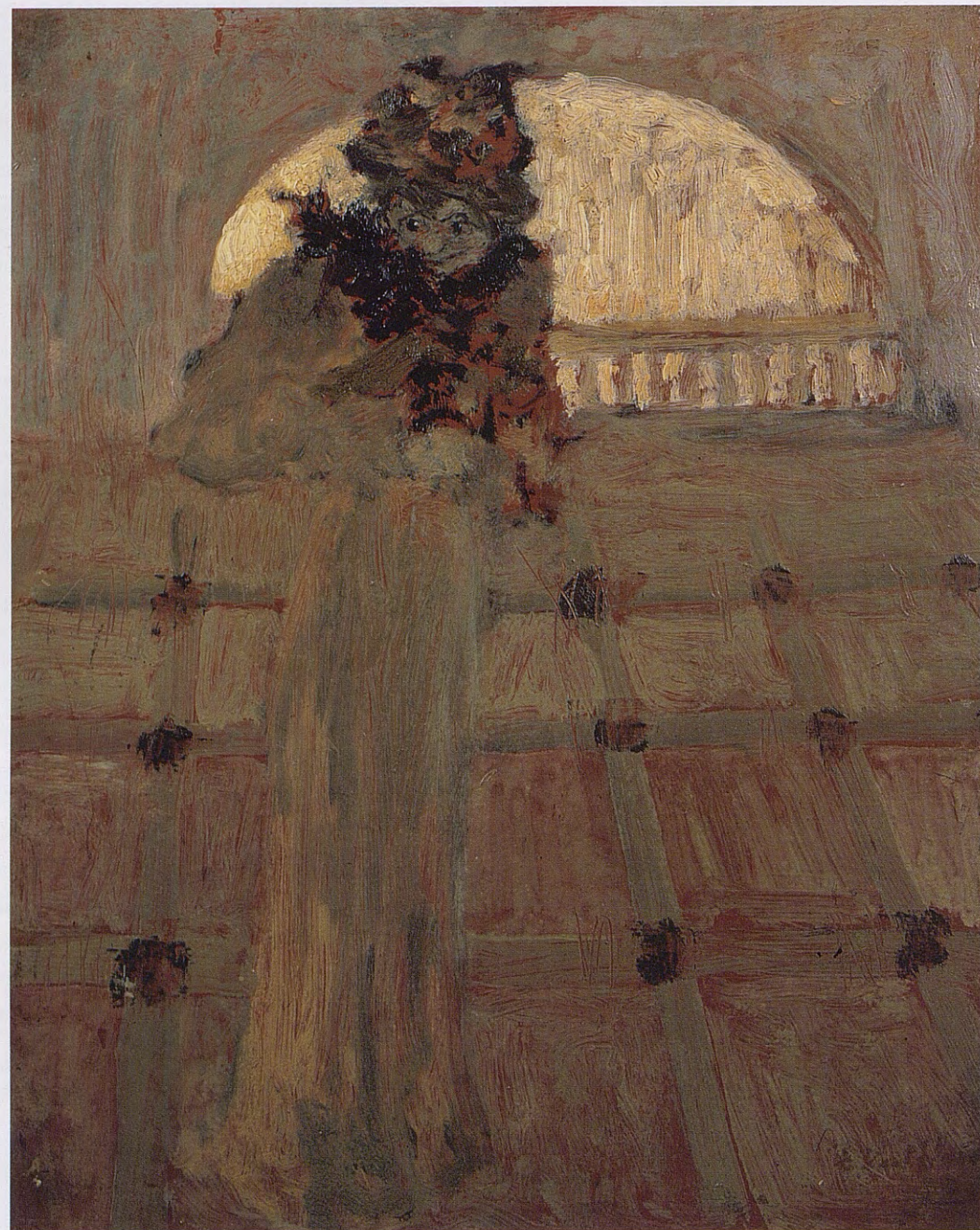
<sup>1</sup> Maurice Denis, *Dapples of Sunlight on the Terrace*, 1890, oil on cardboard, 24 x 20.5 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Denis, *Offering at Calvary*, c. 1890, oil on canvas, 32 x 23.5 cm, priv. coll.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *La Jeune Belgique*, 1890, p. 331.

<sup>4</sup> E. V., Journal, December 1888, I, 1, fol. 29.





III-48

### III-48 At the Opéra

c. 1897

Oil on hardboard, 26.5 × 21.5 cm

Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra,  
Acc. no. 83.13

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson Collection, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 41 – Romain Coolus, Paris, 250 F – Édouard Vuillard, Paris – Artist's studio – Renou, Paris, 1942 – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London, c. 1964 – Mrs Gabrielle Keiller, Kingston Hill, Surrey (Great Britain), 1964 – National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

**Exhibitions:** London, Tooth & Sons, 1964, no. 14 (ill.) – London, Tooth & Sons, April–May 1969, no. 17 (ill.) [*Misia at the Opéra*, 1903] – Toronto–San Francisco–Chicago, 1971–72, no. IX (col. pl.) – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977–78, no. 22 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Fénéon 1970, p. 255 – Georges 1982, p. 70 – Bernier 1991, p. 301 (ill.).

We instantly recognize the third-floor gallery at the Opéra Garnier, and, more particularly, the landing outside the auditorium's upper tier. Before us stands, not one of the fashionable ladies who strut about in the foyer downstairs, but a poorly fitted-out old woman gripping her collar of cat's fur or – worse – chenille, and sporting a vulgar flow-

ery hat. She hangs around outside the auditorium during the interval, alone and far removed from the fashionable circles in the foyer. In this composition the artist presents us with an oblique allegory of the passage of time; the repellent caricature of the old woman's face recalls the monstrous hags in Goya's *¿Qué Tal?* (see ill.). It must be said that Vuillard's eye is especially pitiless here; there is not an iota of tenderness in this portrayal of a music-loving former *cocotte* who confronts us brutally with a reminder of our own impending decline. The cruelty of this composition, as it were an icon of death coming to claim a living soul, will have been made to order for Félix Fénéon: 'fastening her ruche,



Francisco Goya y Lucientes, *¿Qué tal? or Time or The Old Women*, c. 1808–12, oil on canvas, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.

she stands expectantly on the stone paving of one of the upper floors at the Opéra. Her head and the upper part of her body are seen *à contre-jour* against an arched bay and its balustrade. The unity of the composition springs from the red ground on the cardboard, which shows through the play of bright and muted beige tones. The additional dashes of red and a few touches of black serve as highlights, together with the merest hint of green.<sup>1</sup>



E. V., Journal, I.1, fol. 17v.



E. V., Journal, I.2, fol. 18r.



III-49

Vuillard had frequented the great Parisian theatres since his youth; three pages of his Journal for 1888 (see ill.) concern Clairville, Monnier and Blum's extravaganza, *Cendrillon* ('Cinderella')<sup>2</sup> (Châtelet, 29 November 1888). With an unusual degree of inventiveness, they describe the theatre in detail from top to bottom, in addition to the arrival of the musicians in the pit, the installation of the decors, the prince, the wicked fairy, and so on. However, the style of *At the Opéra* has more in common with the artist's work of the second half of the 1890s, when he experimented with an assortment of viewpoints within theatre and concert hall auditoriums (III-63, III-64, III-67).

<sup>1</sup> Félix Fénéon, sale catalogue for the Thadée Natanson collection, 13 June 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Alexandre 1998, pp. 68–70.



E. V., Journal, I.2, fol. 18v.

### III-49

#### At the Théâtre de l'Œuvre

1895

14 × 26 cm

Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*

Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Les Cadres, 1936 (not in cat.) – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 16 – Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 60.

A lithograph based on this painting illustrates one of the Théâtre de l'Œuvre's first bulletins in 1895. It appears again in the *Revue de l'Œuvre* on 1 May 1909.



## III-50

## The Conjuring Act

c. 1895

Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 49 × 39 cm

Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*

Stiftung Sammlung E.G. Bührle, Zurich (Switzerland)

**Provenance:** Sergei Ivanovich Shchukin, Moscow – Shchukin sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 24 March 1900, lot 23 [*Le Café-Concert*] – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 10469), 472.50 F – Édouard Vuillard, 3 May 1905, 472 F – Prince Antoine Bibesco, Paris – Mrs Simon Hodgson, London – Marlborough, London – Emil Georg Bührle, Zurich, 1955 – Stiftung Sammlung E. G. Bührle, Zurich (Switzerland).

**Exhibitions:** London, Marlborough, Feb.-April 1955, no. 69 (ill.) – Berlin, Nationalgalerie, 1958, no. 63 – Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1958, no. 266 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1958-1959, no. 172 – Edinburgh-London, 1961, no. 68 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1972, no. 899 – North America-Japan-Great Britain, 1991-92, no. 72 (col. ill.) [*At the theatre*].

**Bibliography:** Zurich, Bührle, 1971, p. 18, no. 113; and 1973, p. 248, no. 105 (ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, p. 43 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *The lower half of the painting is darkened by the beige wooden backs of the orchestra stalls, upholstered in brown. The heads of the audience, viewed from the back, are caricatured, especially that of the black-haired woman wearing a beige fur and a hat with a large pink bow. The stage is brightly lit; the decor depicts a woman in red flanked by red silhouettes. Somewhat to the right of centre, the singer stands in a grey skirt and red bolero, with her hip thrust slightly out. Pink-and-yellow posters with black lettering to the right.* (JS)

As we put forward some time ago,<sup>1</sup> this composition probably depicts a conjuring act, possibly at the Musée Grévin or at the Théâtre Robert Oudin. The scene is rendered with a somewhat soft focus; only gradually do we recognise the spectators, who are viewed from behind and wearing the over-elaborate coiffures in fashion around 1895. The seats look distinctly like orchestra stalls, rather than the chairs of a café-concert. In the background, a woman with a dress that leaves her arms bare addresses the spectators; a little lower down, a conjuror has set a top hat on a small



III-50

table next to him. Are we looking at the conclusion of a conjuring trick that involved pulling animals out of the hat, with the woman acting as the man's foil; a demonstration of clairvoyance, with the magician's assistant greeting the audience upon emerging from hypnosis; the finale of a disappearing act, with the conjuror's partner springing back to life after having been sawn in half (which might explain the presence of the two posters in the background, possibly decorations on a sort of trick box in which she may have been concealed); or all three at once? Whatever the actual subject, the painting evinces Vuillard's passionate interest in a broad range of stage-shows,

from sophisticated avant-garde theatre to down-to-earth popular entertainments, all of which the artist invariably depicts in as abstruse a manner as possible.

<sup>1</sup> Cogeval 1993b.



III-51

## III-51

## The Detachable Collars

c. 1895

Oil on cardboard, 20 × 19 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Lindon, Paris – Mme Don, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 30 June 1976, lot 34 (ill.) – Thomas Gibson, London – Henry Keswick, Great Britain – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 16, p. 35 (ill.).

**Description:** *Two gentlemen and a lady in a beige coat, with their backs turned to the viewer, against the grey-and-mauve background of a café-concert. The lady sports a hat oddly adorned with blue horns and wears a yellow bow at her neck – an amusing echo of the white detachable collar beneath the man's top hat.* (AC)



Pierre Bonnard, *The Street in Winter*, 1894, oil on wood. Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas (Texas).

This heavily caricatured work reminds us powerfully of Bonnard, who at the same period depicted figures seen from behind in his *The Street in Winter* (see ill.), which could almost be a magazine illustration.

## III-52

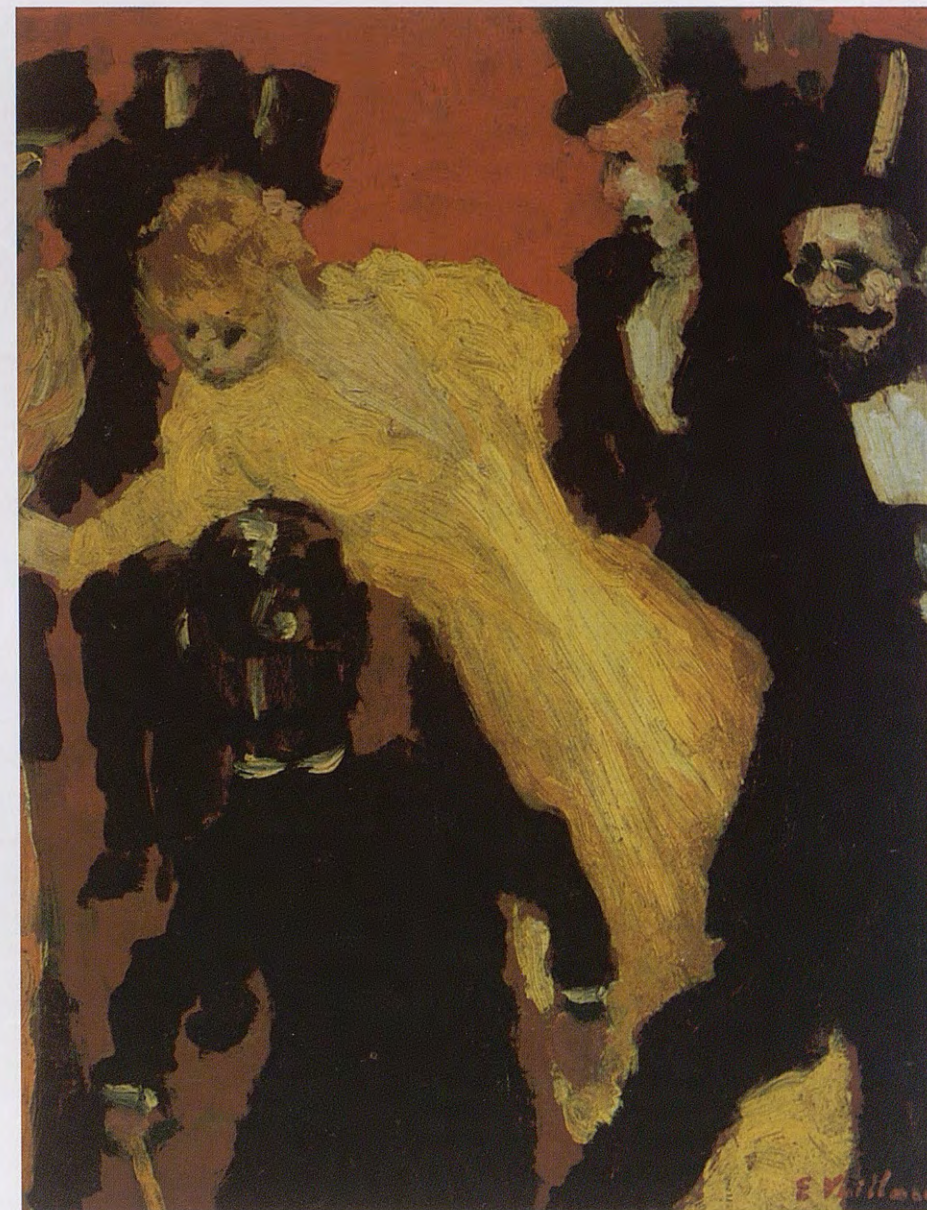
## Theatre Aisle with Toulouse-Lautrec

1894

Oil on cardboard, 26.5 × 21 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, United States



III-52

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Renou et Colle, Paris, c. 1943 – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Professeur Raphaël Salem, Paris; Lionel Salem, Paris – Wildenstein, New York, 1982 – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 25 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101, p. 39 (ill.) [*Theatre aisle with Toulouse-Lautrec*, c. 1892].

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1945, p. 33 (ill.) – Chastel 1946, p. 66 – Preston 1971, fig. 27 – Daniel 1984, pp. 129, 134, fig. 45 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 277-280, fig. 138 – Thomson 1988, pp. 85, 93, col. pl. 69 – Roquebert, exhib. cat., London and Paris, 1991-92, p. 164, fig. 200.

Patricia Ciaffa was the first to establish a connection between this composition and a somewhat obscure passage in the artist's Jour-



nal: 'Consider paintings of contrasting expression. think of Anabella contrasted to the studio scene with Lerolle. or of Lerolle and Puvis in the red aisles at the theatre, Anquetin Lautrec, who has asked me to lunch tomorrow thursday.

'Think of the remarks I made while working on my panels, the need for subjects.

'Here's one subject twisted lines and fragments of almost straight lines. Dark, discordant tones through small [*illegible*] of light expression perfect for memory basically the same thing as my panels. Het up can't concentrate on a single point a single idea. Subject instead of an embroidery, a series of dashes.<sup>1</sup>

The composition, seen from an elevated vantage point, is remarkably dynamic. Toulouse-Lautrec, recognisable from his twisted silhouette and walking stick, is at the centre of a particularly animated circle.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, 7 Nov. 1894, I.2, fol 54v.

### III-53

#### Actress

c. 1894

Oil on cardboard, 28 × 20.3 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York (?) – Private collection, United States – Sale, Christie's, New York, 9 May 2000, lot 308 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.



III-53

### III-54

#### At the Café-Concert, May Belfort

c. 1895

Oil on cardboard, 32 × 51 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – G. Dortu, Paris, 1955 – Hector Brame, Paris – André Joubert, Paris – Knoedler, New York, 1959 – Irving Mitchell Felt, New York, c. 1972 – Private collection, Los Angeles (California) – Sale, Christie's, New York, 16 May 1990, lot 350 (col. ill.) – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948-49, no. 229 – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 21 (ill.) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 46 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, p. 304, fig. 164.

Similar in spirit to *The Conjuring Act* (III-50), this painting depicts one of the stars of the Parisian cafés-concerts, May Belfort, who Toulouse-Lautrec immortalized in various lithographs and paintings. Before an audience that can dimly be made out, huddled together in a formless brown mass, towards the left of the composition, the Irish doll wiggles about in her priceless, yellow children's dress. Huisman and Dortu's description of

this sordid apparition, worthy of the role played by Bette Davis in Robert Aldrich's film *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* (1962), could hardly be bettered: 'All in all, this bleating lamb is worth the trouble. She is so laughably child-like, dressed up as a baby, with the locks of her hair draped across her shoulders, sometimes clasping a black cat in her arms, sometimes not; and, at Les Décadents, a roar goes up as they join in for the chorus of her song, while she stands there stiff as a poker throughout.'<sup>1</sup> We also know that Toulouse-Lautrec liked to sing her naughty ditty at the top of his voice:

'I've got a little cat  
I'm very fond of zat.'



III-54

Vuillard, we can be sure, will have been quick to join in the chorus.

<sup>1</sup> Ph. Huisman and M.G. Dortu, *Lautrec par Lautrec*, Paris, La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1964, p. 110.

### III-55

#### Spectators at the Café-Concert

c. 1895

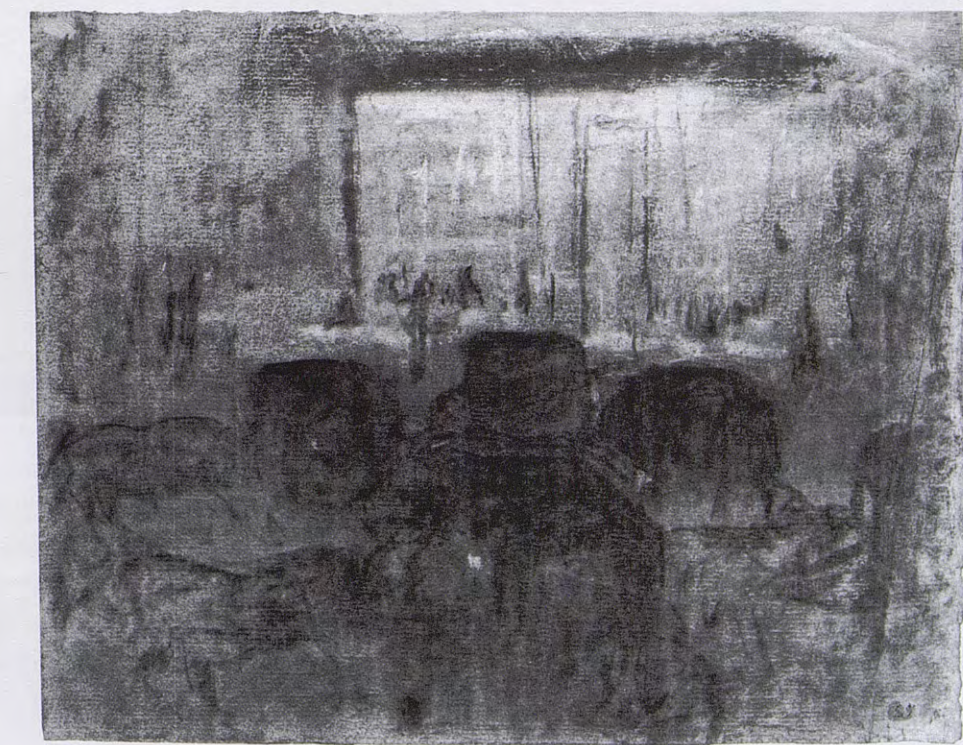
Pastel on paper, 20 × 25.2 cm

Stamp 3, lower right

Private collection, Greece

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection, Greece.

**Exhibition:** London, JPL, 1988, no. 11 (col. ill.).



III-55



### III-56 Night-Birds

c. 1894-95  
Pastel on bistre paper, 24.8 × 15.9 cm  
Stamp 2, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris – Serge Dignine, Paris – Norton Gallery and School of Art, West Palm Beach (Florida), 1980 – Frédéric P. Weissman – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 10 May 1989, lot 101A (col. ill.) – Private collection, Switzerland – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 19 Nov. 1989, lot 8 (col. ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 9 Nov. 1994, lot 146 (col. ill.) – Tom James Co. / Oxxford Clothes, United States – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** Munich, Kunstverein, 1959, no. 34 (ill.).

The two figures depicted here are probably not Valentin le Désossé and La Goulue, as it might at first appear. The young woman is difficult to identify; the man with the moustache, on the other hand, would appear to be Paul Sescou, a photographer who specialised in reproductions of paintings.<sup>1</sup> Sescou was one of the pillars of the Moulin Rouge, and his studio was located directly opposite, at 9 place Pigalle. His reputation as a compulsive womaniser, coupled with his virtuoso banjo playing (might he



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Paul Sescou*, 1891, oil on cardboard. The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn (New York).



III-56

be the figure depicted in a painting by Bonnard dating from the same period?),<sup>2</sup> earned him the friendship of Toulouse-Lautrec, who painted his portrait (see ill.) and dedicated a poster to him. Vuillard will have enjoyed making caricatures of this emblematic figure of Paris nightlife.

<sup>1</sup> The author is indebted for this information to the erudition of Anne Roquebert, Curator, Research Laboratory of the Musées de France.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bonnard, *Banjo Player*, 1895, oil on wood, 42 × 65 cm, private coll. (D.01770).



III-57

### III-57 In the Wings at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre

c. 1894  
Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 31.8 × 28.6 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis (Minnesota), Acc. No. 70.83

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Lefevre, London, 1955 – Vivian Leigh, London, 1955 – Lefevre, London, 1956 – Stephen Hahn, New York, 1958 – Mike Nichols, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 28 Oct. 1970, lot 37 (ill.), bought in – Mike Nichols gift to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis.

**Exhibition:** London, Lefevre, Sept.-Oct. 1956, no. 14 (ill.).

**Description:** *A dark-green upright flat with a woman in a violet blouse and light-coloured dress to right of centre. To left of centre, a second woman, standing stiffly on the brown floor, silhouetted in black against the blue scenery.* (AC)



III-58

### III-58 The Wings at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre

c. 1894  
Oil on canvas, 24.5 × 18 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Gimpel, London – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** London, Gimpel, 1956.

**Description:** *To the left, a young woman in black. Her silhouette stands out sharply against a brightly lit red carpet. A uniform tone of burnt umber pervades the remainder of the canvas, to the right.* (JS)



III-59

### III-59 A Gallery at the Gymnase

1899  
Study for a lithograph (R-M 48)  
Glue-based distemper on paper, 24.7 × 19 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 78.





III-60

### III-60

#### At the Music-Hall, the Olympia

c. 1899

Oil on cardboard, 27 × 21 cm

Stamp 1, upper right

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 2 July 1943, lot 89 – Gaston Baheux, Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France) – Pierre Bloch, Paris, c. 1961 – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 21 June 1961, lot 101 (ill.), bought in – Bloch sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 12 March 1964, lot 81 (ill.) – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 7 March 1973, lot 37 (ill.) – Yvonne Schechner, Pantin (France) – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Carré, 1942, no. 14 bis.

**Description:** *The vast semicircle of a theatre, with a succession of lights and, under the light-toned swath of a balcony, theatre-goers coming and going. The brilliant silhouette of a woman emerges from the neutral background enlivened by figures in black. Many details have been incised with the wooden tip of the paintbrush. (AC)*



III-61



III-61.1

### III-61

#### [Theatrical Scenes]

c. 1900

Oil on canvas, 65 × 80 cm

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Divided into three separate panels (III-61.1– III-61.3)

**Description:** *Three theatre scenes depicted on the same canvas. (AC)*



III-61.2

### III-61.2

#### [Theatrical Scenes]

c. 1900

Oil on canvas, 15.5 × 12.5 cm

Stamp 3, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, New York – Current whereabouts unknown.



III-61.3

### III-61.3

#### [Theatrical Scenes]

c. 1900

Oil on canvas, 16 × 18.5 cm

Stamp 3, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, New York – Current whereabouts unknown.

### III-61.1

#### [Theatrical Scenes]

c. 1900

Oil on canvas, 28 × 23 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, New York – Current whereabouts unknown.



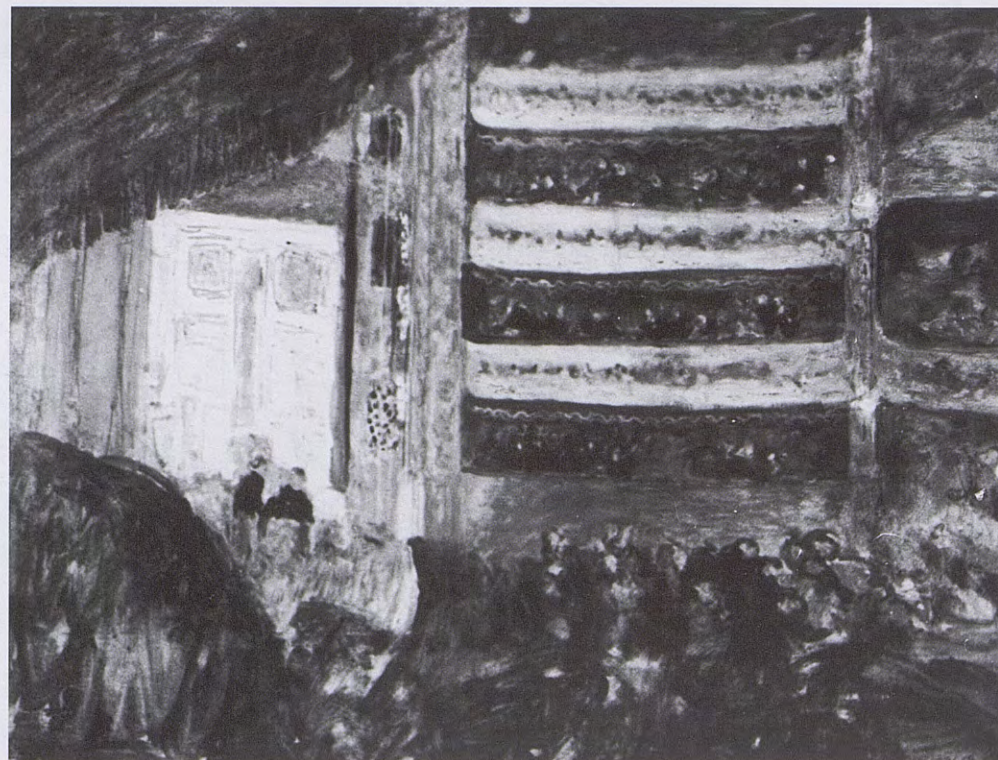


III-62

### III-62 A Loge at the Opéra

c. 1899  
Oil on canvas, 46 × 38 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 21725), 13 Oct. 1919, exchanged for VIII-238 plus 350 F – Dr Jacques Soubise, 2 July 1920, 4,000 F – Georges Petit, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 24744) – Eugène Blot, Paris, 19 Nov. 1929, 27,000 F – Blot sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 2 June 1933, lot 107, 7,850 F – Paul Rosenberg, Paris – H. Cahen, Paris – A. Dorville, Paris – Dorville sale, Hall du Savoy, Nice (France), 24–27 June 1942, lot 402 (ill.) – Sale, Galerie Koller, Zurich, 13 June 1986, lot 5139 – Maurice Keitelman, Brussels – Private collection.



III-63

**Exhibitions:** Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum, 1929, no. 149 (ill.) – Paris, Rosenberg, 1936, no. 35.

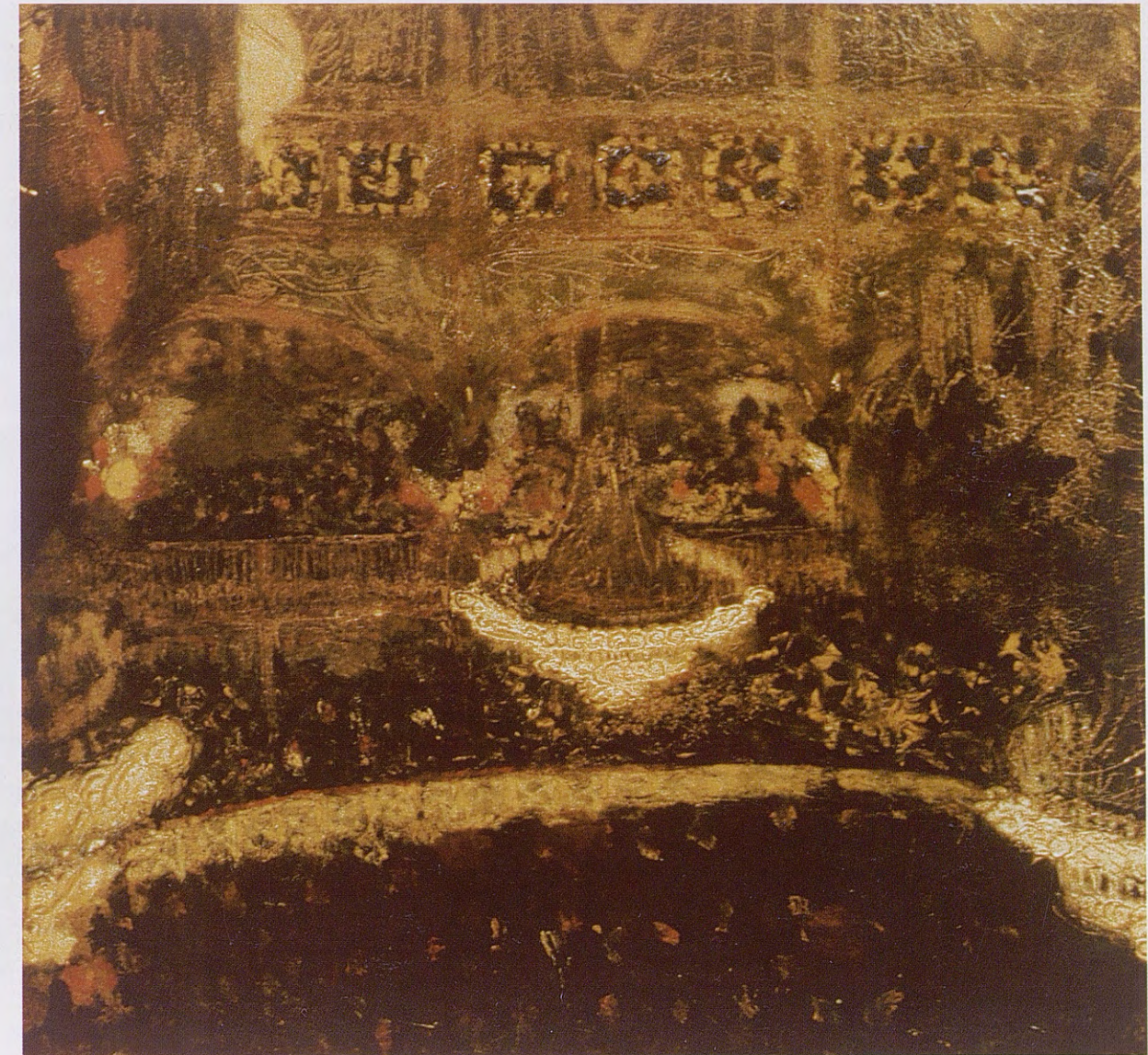
**Description:** *A detail of the auditorium during a performance at the Paris Opéra. Women in pale dresses and gentlemen in black evening dress are visible in the dress-circle loges and the ground-floor boxes below.* (JS)

### III-63 At the Theatre

c. 1900  
Oil on cardboard, 52 × 67.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Jeffress, London – Lefevre, London, 1954 – Louis Dreyfus, United States – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *The theatre is rendered in muted red and green tones. A raised curtain is glimpsed to the left; on the pink stage two soldiers in red trousers stand before a large pink and pale-yellow door. A quick sketch.* (AC)



III-64

### III-64 The Concert Hall at the Trocadéro

c. 1899  
Oil on cardboard, 33 × 35 cm  
Signed, upper left: *E Vuillard*  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Alfred Athis Natanson, Paris; Denise Tabah (née Natanson), Rueil-Malmaison (France) – Philip Granville, London – Knoedler, New York – Hirschl & Adler, New York – Allen Sven Oxenburgh, New York – Paul Prouté, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 212 – New York, Hirschl & Adler, 1973, no. 86 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Mauner 1978, p. 258, fig. 136.

**Description:** *A view from the upper circle, looking down on the stalls beneath three spherical chandeliers, of which only the central one is entirely visible. The balconies are decked with bunting; blue-and-yellow stained-glass windows above the arcades.* (JS)

In a small painting of the same period, Bonnard also depicts a concert seen from an upper gallery (see ill.). It is an unusual motif for both artists. Vuillard's composition represents the large concert or festival hall designed by the architect Davioud in the Palais du Trocadéro. Jacques Salomon's description contains one inaccuracy: the strip above the gallery was not glazed but consisted rather of square crests executed in gold and blue mosaics (see ill.).



Pierre Bonnard, *The Concert or The Concert Lamoureux*, c. 1895, oil on canvas. Private collection.





III-65

### III-65 Two Female Silhouettes (sketch)

c. 1899  
Oil on canvas, 27 × 37 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Girard, Paris, 1949 – George N. Richard, New York – Richard sale, Christie's, New York, 14 Nov. 1989, lot 26 (col. ill.) – Alain Delon, Paris – Delon sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 25 Nov. 1990, lot 26 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 22 Nov. 1993, lot 10 (col. ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Didier Imbert, 1990, no. 11.

**Description:** Two female silhouettes, one in black seen from behind on the left, a pink rose pinned to her black hair, the other shown full-face, with a yellow bow on her head. The bare canvas shows through on the dress of the second woman and in a broad area to the right. Green background. (AC)



III-66

### III-66 Interior of a Loge

c. 1899  
Oil on cardboard, 28 × 30.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – M. Payelle, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A rather skimpy sketch in oils and turpentine. A brightly lit square enlivens the red wall of the corridor to the right of the box. A spectator seated in the front row is clearly visible with his bald pate and ring of hair, as are the backs of several brown armchairs. A woman in black and a man with a white shirtfront stand to one side; he is gazing at her. A yellow stage glitters brightly in the background. The ceiling is red. (JS)



III-67

### III-67 The Proscenium at the Théâtre Antoine

c. 1899  
Oil on cardboard, 31.5 × 49.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Atlanta (Georgia)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York – Mina de Vallenilla, Caracas, 1956 – Knoedler, New York – Mrs Edward Hutton, Long Island (New York), 1959 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 July 1964, lot 24 (col. ill.) – Hirschl & Adler, New York – George T. Bowdoin, New York – Stephen Hahn, New York – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 12 June 1970, lot 37 (col. ill.), bought in – Private collection, Atlanta.

**Exhibitions:** Caracas, Bellas Artes, Jan. 1956, no. 43 – Caracas, Fundación Eugenio Mendoza, 1957, no. 25 (ill.) – New York, Hahn, 1969 (ill.)

– Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 34 (ill.) – Montreal-Paris, 2000-01, pp. 249 (col. ill.), 457.

**Bibliography:** Forgiione 1992, p. 155, fig. 81.

**Description:** Two women in the foreground, silhouetted against a brown balustrade upholstered with red velvet. The one on the left is viewed in profile, wearing a coat and large red hat; her companion is seen from behind, in dark blue, her grey hat decorated with roses that conceal the curtain, of which only the border decorated with red motifs is visible. (JS)

The stage is seen from the interior of a box, as if the artist were on his feet, looking downwards. In the foreground, two women stand out sharply against the stalls, which we glimpse on the left. The stage, with its curtain decorated in red, appears on the right. The prevailing purplish-red tone is very striking; the areas seen against the light, especially the interior of the box, are hastily sketched,

giving the impression that the cardboard ground is showing through. A preparatory sketch in the artist's notebooks provides us with a summary drawing of the same scene and dates the painting to around 1899 (see ill.). The framing of the composition, which might at first glance be described as being 'in the manner of Degas' (though the latter never made all that much use of it), in fact foreshadows certain twentieth-century film shots.



E. V., preparatory sketch for *The Proscenium at the Théâtre Antoine*, c. 1899, graphite on paper, 11 x 18 cm. Private collection.





III-68

## III-68

Jeanne Raunay in *Iphigénie*

1899

Oil on cardboard, 57 × 50 cm  
Signed and inscribed, upper right:  
à Emmanuel Bibesco / E Vuillard  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Prince Emmanuel Bibesco, Paris; Prince Antoine Bibesco, Paris – Mrs Simon Hodgson, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 3 June 1970, lot 62 (ill.) – Samuel et Benjamin Raxlen, Montreux (Switzerland) – Sale, Sotheby's, Los Angeles (California), 21 May 1973, lot 10 (ill.), bought in – Cassel Gallery, Palm Beach (Florida) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 26 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** *Art in America*, Sept. 1971, p. 105 (ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 120.

This composition depicts a performance of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* at the Théâtre de la Renaissance in December 1899. A page in *Le Théâtre*,<sup>1</sup> a periodical dedicated to the theatrical arts, includes two photographs of the singer Jeanne Raunay in the priestess' costume of Iphigenia (see ill.); it is obvious that Vuillard has modelled his central figure on her. The singer is praised to the skies in the accompanying commentary: 'The admirable delivery and the profound pathos of Madame



Jeanne Raunay in the costume for *Iphigénie*, c. 1900. Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris.

Raunay were perfectly suited to this role of a priestess who, obliged to sacrifice shipwrecked sailors, is suddenly moved by a stranger whom she will shortly recognise to be her brother.' It is probably the introductory scene to *Iphigénie* that Vuillard gives us here; the tempest of the overture has died down, and the heroine discourses with the chorus of priestesses, recounting a premonitory dream that has troubled her sleep:

'Iphigenia: I saw again the palace of my father  
And was about to feel his embrace...  
But instantly he appeared before my eyes  
Awash with blood! His body covered with wounds ...  
The priestesses: Oh fearful dream! Oh night of horror!  
Oh grief! Oh mortal dread! Has your wrath no mercy then?  
Hear our cries, oh heavens! Be at rest!'

By adopting a foreshortened perspective squarely facing the stage (one that would

not be possible from the stalls or the dress circle), Vuillard has captured the essential elements of the drama: the protagonist, tottering under the burden of fate; the chorus of priestesses standing stock still behind her, commenting on the action. The *da sotto in su* lighting of the footlights is rendered rather skilfully, especially where it strikes the nameless faces of the chorus.

<sup>1</sup> *Le Théâtre*, Paris, Jan. 1900.

## III-69

## Scene from a Greek Tragedy

c. 1899

Oil on cardboard, 32 × 52 cm  
Signed, lower right: E Vuillard  
Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum,  
Hanover (Germany), Inv. No. PNM 956

**Provenance:** Alex Maguy, Paris – Dr Paul Raffray, Paris – Georges Schick, Paris – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 18 June 1962, lot 132 (ill.) – Sale, Hôtel

Rameau, Versailles, 2 June 1965, lot 64 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 27 Nov. 1965, lot 82 (ill.) – E. J. Van Wisselingh, Amsterdam – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 10 Dec. 1969, lot 57 (ill.), bought in – Richard L. Feigen, New York and Stephen Hahn, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 17 May 1978, lot 50 (col. ill.), bought in – Peter Lunchuf, Amsterdam – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 14 Dec. 1981, lot 35 (ill.) – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hanover (Germany), 1983.

**Exhibitions:** Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 27 (ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona, 1991-92, no. 55, p. 124 (col. ill.) – Lausanne (Switzerland), 2000-01, no. 37, p. 105 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Georges 1982, p. 119 – Stubbe 1987, pp. 151-164 – Cogeval, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1991-92, p. 126 – Forgione 1992, p. 140, fig. 68.

There is a certain ambiguity concerning the iconography of this small painting. That it was long thought to depict a scene from Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* seems inexplicable, as it manifestly shows a characteristic scene from a Greek tragedy, with broken columns



III-69



and women clad in loose tunics. The notion that it might represent a performance of *Iphigénie en Tauride* (see III-68), tempting though it may be, must also be discarded: there is no such scene with a prostrate woman and two figures – probably coryphaei – pointing at her, in any dramatised version of *Iphigénie*. We therefore abide by the interpretation we put forward in the Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes catalogue of 1991-92: the scene depicted in this composition is most likely the introductory scene in *The Libation Bearers*, from Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy. Vuillard may be presenting the moment when Electra, overcome with grief, comes to her father's tomb to offer libations. The chorus laments the murder of her father by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, and the coryphaeus comes forward to rouse the young woman to vengeance:

'Electra: Attendant women, who order our house, since you are with me in this supplica-

tion and escort me here, be also my advisors in this rite.

What shall I say, as I pour out these outpourings of sorrow? How say the good word, how make my prayer to my father? ...

Coryphaeus: Say simply: "One to kill them, for the life they took."<sup>1</sup>

The identification with Aeschylus' tragedy is almost perfect save for one detail: to our knowledge, *The Libation Bearers* was never performed in Paris in the 1890s, or even later. However, the same scene occurs in Hugo von Hoffmansthal's *Elektra*, which was inspired by *The Libation Bearers* and was in turn the inspiration for Richard Strauss' famous opera of 1909. Ligné-Poe staged *Elektra* at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre in 1909 with his wife, Suzanne Desprès, cast in the title role. Vuillard had renewed his acquaintance with the couple around 1908 and had painted several portraits of the actress that same year (VII-420 to VII-424).

The dramatic action in *Elektra* and *The Libation Bearers* is virtually identical, with one minor difference: in Hoffmansthal's version the servants treat Electra with contempt and jeer at her, a particularly close parallel to the action the artist depicts in his rendition of the tragic scene. The style of the composition, however, can hardly be dated to 1908; rather we would place it around the late 1890s. At all events, this small-scale painting establishes Vuillard's fondness for Greek classics long before he tackled the décor for the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées or painted his *Au Louvre* series.

<sup>1</sup> Aeschylus, *The Libation Bearers*, lines 84-89 & 121, trans. Richmond Lattimore, University of Chicago Press, 1953.



E. Vuillard

III-70

### III-70

#### The Chaigneau Sisters

c. 1911

Oil on canvas, 44 × 65 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hallsborough, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 July 1970, lot 52 (col. ill.) – Hirschl & Adler, New York – Art market, Los Angeles (California) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Two women, a cellist in a blue dress and a pianist are presented against a grey wall with a large pink-and-blue tapestry on the right. The black chair and piano impart a strong tonal value to the composition. (AC)

Vuillard was to paint a number of concert scenes in the second period of his creative life (see *Concert, Salle Gaveau*, IX-222 and XII-143). This composition originally bore the title *Au concert* ('At the concert'). As there were very few female duos and trios

1895, they formed a trio and went on a European tour. Suzanne married Herman Joachim in 1910; their daughter Irène Joachim subsequently became an outstanding interpreter of Mélisande. Vuillard's picture presents a recital with cello and piano; and we know that Marguerite and Thérèse performed as a duo. Between 1911 and 1914, the 'Chaigneau concerts' were held in an auditorium known as Le Foyer at 34 rue Vaneau. A number of leading musicians performed there, such as Pablo Casals, Vincent d'Indy and Pierre Monteux. The sketchy female figure in the audience, on the left edge in the foreground, suggests a late date of around 1911, when her large, flat hat topped with a froth of feathers would have been in fashion. This is also consistent with the manner in which the artist has sketched the dresses and with the style of decoration of the auditorium, which recalls that of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.

<sup>1</sup> These details were given by Jean-Michel Nectoux, to whom the author is extremely grateful.



Marguerite, Thérèse and Suzanne Chaigneau, 1905, photograph. Private collection.

at the time it was painted, we are inclined to believe that it depicts the daughters of the *peintre animalier*, Fernand Chaigneau (1830-1906). Suzanne and Marguerite Chaigneau (see ill.) were twins, born in 1875.<sup>1</sup> They played the violin and cello respectively, whilst their younger sister, Thérèse, born a year later, was a pianist. In



## IV – Interiors with ‘Obbligato’ Family (1889-98)

*‘All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That’s his.’*

Oscar Wilde

Paintings of Vuillard’s youth such as *Octagonal Self-Portrait*, *In Bed* and *The Lady of Fashion* (II-25, II-123, II-135) display well-known aspects of his genius: the sense of humour, the love of being provocative and enigmatic, and the use of an explosive Cloisonnism. If one had to select ten or so paintings to characterise him in the eyes of experts and the general public alike, most people would surely choose *Under the Lamp*, *The Suitor* or *Large Interior with Six Figures* (IV-78, IV-132, IV-215). These thoughtful, complex, even hermetic works fascinate connoisseurs and appeal to everyone. Looking at them in order to know Vuillard, we are truly *in medias res*. Here we have his family observed in private, generally his mother and sister and his closest friends – Roussel, Magnin, Percheron – and also real family dramas like the one that explodes at us from the great canvas in Zurich (IV-215). This means that Vuillard’s focus and his relationship with reality had imperceptibly evolved between 1892 and 1895. The characteristics of this new style are unmistakable. Interiors in which the figures are firmly planted and the decoration seems to leave the walls and float along with the objects in a rarefied atmosphere. A screen of short brushstrokes evens out the pictorial surface, negates the sense of depth and distorts relationships of scale. The bedrooms full of seamstresses (see ill.), kitchens with glass partitions, windows opening onto apartment building courtyards, cotton bobbins searched for in large drawers, these are the immovable boundaries of a real hive of industry where the act of sewing ends up merging into the act of painting. Vuillard spent a long time perfecting this original pictorial theatricality, making patience and reflection integral parts of his creative process. As he always said, ‘you get there either in a flash or through old age!’<sup>1</sup>

Vuillard was a remarkable caricaturist with a genius for capturing attitudes, especially those of women; heaven knows



Dressmaker's workshop, the trimmers, c. 1895, anonymous photograph. Musée Carnavalet, Paris (photograph, Ladet).

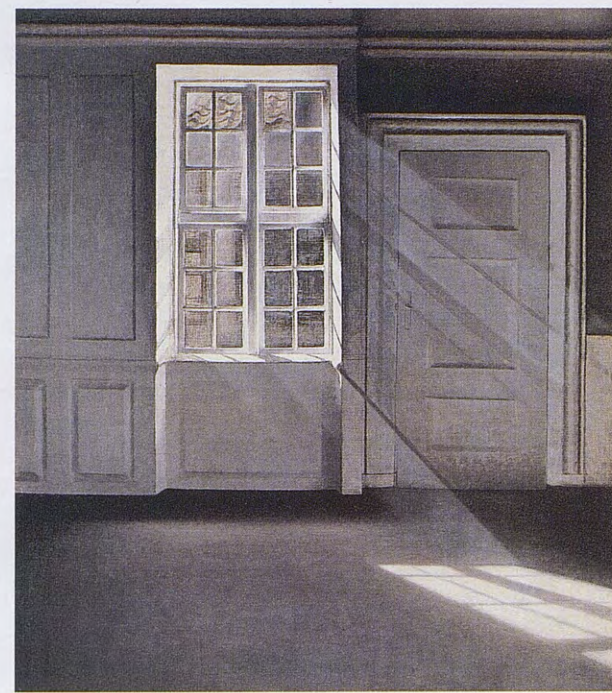
he was perfectly familiar with the biddable, reassuring *mundus muliebris* always on the go that had helped to form his artist's eye – as it did his discreet sensuality. Indeed, in his Journal of 1894 he states unhesitatingly: ‘When I turn my attention to men, I always see them as wicked burdens, I feel that they are ridiculous objects. Never with women, where I always find a way of picking out some elements that satisfy the painter in me.’<sup>2</sup> It is true that women had filled his imagination since his childhood; now they became the starting point for a derangement of reality he prayed for. Its deepest truth was a world *of the feminine*, authorising the appropriation of an elusive sensuality that asserts itself daily. This may seem paradoxical at first glance, since we know of few love affairs before the late 1890s. Nevertheless, in his autobiographical notes he wrote opposite the year 1894: ‘love stories’,<sup>3</sup> and this is confirmed in the Journal of the same year by the following entry: ‘On leaving [the Louvre], confide sentimental matters to Bonnard for



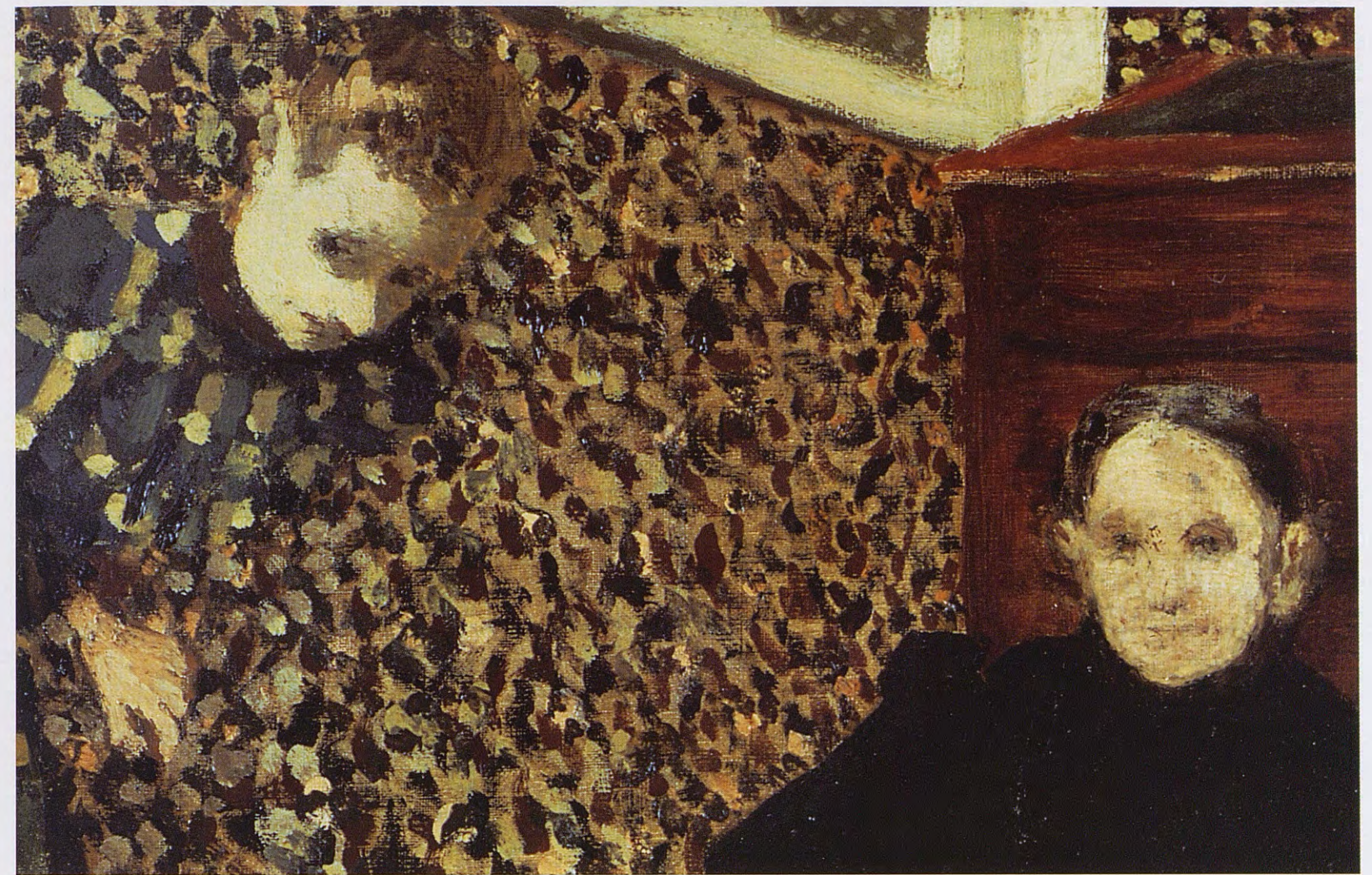
the first time. Sad.<sup>24</sup> His choice, like that of many young Parisians at the time, was somewhat limited: either one courted and then married a young woman of one's acquaintance – of one's own sort – or one chased easier – and more amusing – pretty girls in the night-clubs and the brothels. All his affection was therefore directed towards the three women who ran his house. He willingly left all decisions regarding the household to them, even as he gradually became his little family's centre of attention. They admired and adored him. The most that can be said is that he did not feel cut out to be a *pater familias*. Further evidence of this can be seen in the frenzied images he soon painted, like *Dinner Time* (IV-2), a savage caricature of his family engaged in a sort of witches' sabbath and of himself, the haggard clown cowering in the doorway. The feminine background may, then, have been a solid base in the general flux of signs. Far from yielding to the 'sound, realistic good sense' that too many critics attribute to him, he clearly ranked spatial perception after the artificial and perverse reinvention of reality, in which his subtle handling of chromatic relationships is darkened by the weight of a theatrical *fatum*. Vuillard's interiors may be 'intimate', as has too often been said, but they are first and foremost disturbing, stamped with strangeness. In a word, they are still *Symbolist*, as are the empty rooms of Hammershøi (see ill.) and the Belgian artists Khnopff, Mellery and Le Brun. Vuillard painted all these masterpieces between 1892 and 1897, that is, when his gift for scenography was bringing him greater public recognition than his painting, which was still relatively unknown. In the evenings in the L'Oeuvre workshop he would paint with distemper on canvas or wrapping paper. Back at home he became the unchallenged stage director, as inspired as Lugné-Poe. And his family paid the price for his dramatic genius.

The 'generation of 1890' openly derided Naturalism. Albert Aurier did so in all his articles: he defined Meissonnier's work as 'bourgeois art, middle-man art, an art that was no longer completely chromo but gave itself airs as good painting, an art that cost dearly, very dearly, and was clean, pretty and not too disturbing.'<sup>25</sup> It should be remembered that in his article on Armand Séguin, Maurice Denis lashed out at Courbet in passing: 'unconscious genius, [who] uttered legendary stupidities.'<sup>26</sup> Vuillard was less prejudiced but, to use Redon's words, he disliked painting with 'too low a ceiling' and was not a 'parasite of the subject.'<sup>27</sup> A number of Vuillard's paintings (around 1892) show mother and daughter

in the apartment at 346 rue Saint-Honoré. 'Gentle' Édouard, who liked nothing better than to work behind closed doors, invented for them situations in which, facing each other in lamplight, standing in front of a door opening on to other rooms, they manifest a violent hostility that cannot reflect their everyday reality. At most, perhaps, Marie's prolonged spinsterhood may occasionally have irritated her mother – in those days a woman still unmarried at the age of thirty gave rise to gossip – but Vuillard gradually transformed their relationship into a sado-masochistic one in which portly Madame-mother, even when seated, domineers over poor pale fearful Marie, who looks as if she is about to melt and disappear into the mottled crazy-looking wallpaper in the background. It really seems as if Vuillard imposed the muffled atmosphere and confined fatality of Maeterlinck, Beaubourg and Ibsen to his own family, and this shows a major influence of the literature and art of the theatre on his mind. Furthermore, the plays presented by Paul Fort and Lugné enabled Vuillard to push reality beyond his modest, socially restricted world to the glamour of theatrical production – terrifying and pitiless, no doubt, but likely to be admired by the coterie of *La Revue Blanche*, and more comprehensible to a wide public (as the success of his painting had confirmed in recent years). Each little painting from this period, usually painted in oils on small pieces of cardboard, is a fragment of *one and the same* play, in which Madame Vuillard, a letter



Vilhelm Hammershøi, *Dust Particles Dancing in a Ray of Sunlight*, 1900, oil on canvas. Ordstrupgaardsamlingen, Copenhagen.



*Interior with the Artist's Mother and Sister*, IV-112 (detail)

clenched in her hand, rebukes her daughter and loses her temper as she interrogates her. And yet the letters written by the two women to Édouard, and the photographs that begin to appear in 1897, present a cloudless, peaceful reality – in a word, normal – but for that reason too ordinary for the volcanic young Nabi.

In *Mother and Daughter against a Red Background* (II-106) and *Interior, the Artist's Mother and Sister* (IV-112) storms artfully fomented by Vuillard seem ready to erupt at any moment. The artist injects poison into evenings behind closed doors, destroys any comforting privacy and condemns his figures to perpetual imprisonment within the pictorial frame. One cannot help seeing here the strong influence of the contemporary cult of decadence in the heightened theatrical atmosphere. Maurice Maeterlinck found the right words to describe his plays, made of murmuring and stifled whispers: 'Innocent destinies, involuntary enemies, intertwine and unravel to the ruin of everyone, under the sad gaze of the wisest, who foresee the future but are powerless to change anything in the cruel, inflexible games that love and death

play with the living. And love and death and the other powers dispense a sort of sly justice, with penalties – for this injustice does not pay – that are perhaps just the whims of fate. Fundamentally you find the idea of the Christian God blended with the Fate of the ancients, driven back into the impenetrable darkness of nature and from there amusing themselves by spying on, upsetting and casting gloom over the plans, thoughts, feelings and modest happiness of men.'<sup>28</sup> I have sometimes compared his creations (Maleine, Mélisande, Palomides) to tiny organisms observed on a sensitive plate under the microscope.<sup>29</sup> The gentle Belgian giant, we should remember, was passionate about biology and entomology and wrote *La Vie des abeilles* and *La Vie des fourmis*. Vuillard loved to impose these serial pantomimes on his family, assigning the parts of characters who brush against each other without speaking and unwittingly carry the burden of their own destiny. Jules Lemaitre described Maeterlinck's theatre as 'Aeschylus for sick pupazzi.'<sup>30</sup>

One could venture to say that Vuillard *manipulated* those around him so as to transform the most extreme situations



into subjects for his painting. Indeed, this taste for manipulation, though he kept it discreet, would remain with him for the rest of his life. Once he had gained real self-assurance and was no longer hampered by complexes about his physique, he won the hearts of many women; at times behaving with hypocritical cynicism to those who loved him, especially Lucy Hessel.

The second half of the year 1892 was a significant time for Vuillard. He painted the overdoors for Madame Desmarais (V-28.1 to 6), and Kerr-Xavier Roussel's amorous indiscretions gave him the opportunity to reverse the balance of power in their close friendship. It was Vuillard-the-timid who took the initiative. Study of the letters in the Salomon archives shows that early in the year Roussel had broken the heart of a girl called Caroline<sup>11</sup> – or worse, made her pregnant and then left her. As always happened in bourgeois circles of the period, family and friends joined forces to brush off Caro (Caroline): it was she alone they thought guilty of 'imprudence'. The letters exchanged between Henry Roussel (the painter's brother), Madame Vuillard, Denis and Bonnard make this quite clear. In order to save Kerr, and for the pleasure of travelling with him – his first real escape from the restricted milieu of his youth – Vuillard took him off on a hurried trip to Belgium and Holland, a very romantic notion, to escape from the recriminations of the unfortunate girl, who was going around weeping at the doors of Vuillard's friends and family. Other solutions might have been found, but people had ceased to hold out against Vuillard. He was even prepared to give up his commission for Madame Desmarais's screen and pass it on to Bonnard (V-32.1 to 5), although he was not doing well financially; this proves the extent to which his friendship with Kerr-Xavier Roussel dominated and justified all his actions. Kerr and Édouard 'fled' on November 7, 1892, provided with addresses kindly given them by the Dutch Nabi Jan Verkade. On the 9<sup>th</sup> Vuillard sent a frantic letter to his friend Bonnard: 'Don't tell Caro where we are. It's simple though it's bloody annoying', and Roussel added a line: 'Be sure to follow the advice of wise old Vuillard as regards Caro'.<sup>12</sup> A few days later, kind Maurice Denis was worried and wrote: 'I have even wondered, can you believe it? whether there was not some connection between this hasty departure and the anarchist attempt'.<sup>13</sup> The next day Bonnard reported that he had taken charge of Caro's dog La Grogne, and that she was clamouring for the two friends' address but that he wasn't going to give it to her.<sup>14</sup>



E. V., *Roussel Playing the Piano and Mme Vuillard Listening*, 1894, pen, ink and watercolour on paper, 20 x 31.1 cm. Private collection.

And five days later Madame Vuillard wrote to her son: 'You absolutely must stay away (C[aro]). The lady's at it again here. She's going to people's houses and she could well do something crazy if she managed to find out where you are'.<sup>15</sup> This bolt north not only gave Vuillard and Roussel the opportunity to see Flemish painting *in situ* and be astounded at the rich holdings of the museums – the most important aspect of the trip for us today – but it strengthened the bond between the two old friends. It also gave Vuillard a chance to think up a counter-measure to his best friend's dissolute life: the quite mad – and very selfish – idea of thrusting Roussel into the arms of his sister Marie. Marie was seven years older than Vuillard's friend; she was shy and thought herself unattractive. She must have felt overcome in his presence and very disconcerted. Kerr-Xavier was a magnificent young man who always dressed like an artist of the Romantic era (see ill.), a lady-killer who could recite lines from Mallarmé and Virgil, Lucretius and Plato to anyone who cared to hear: 'He could, for whole evenings, recite entire poems by them all and draw sketches illustrating the cadences', Thadée Natanson remembered.<sup>16</sup> This had no importance for Vuillard: time would soften the sharp edges. Madame Vuillard must have wondered about many things after the 'Caro' episode. Even the tactful Alexandre, faced with the obvious disparity, warned his brother in an intelligent letter of June 1893: 'And to get back to our lovers. I was not surprised by the news since according to the general tone of your letters to everyone for a good three months as an impartial spectator I was expecting something like this to happen and what I noticed during my stay in Paris only confirmed the idea which I did not talk about because there was a large black mark against it in terms of the age dif-

ference and the financial position. They will probably have a hard time of it sometimes but since they seem to like each other they will be happy all the same'.<sup>17</sup> Much later, Thadée Natanson would write bluntly that if Roussel had agreed to marry Marie 'it was because she was Vuillard's sister'.<sup>18</sup> Many paintings of the family from this period can be read chronologically as stages in the courtship of Kerr and Marie, *The Suitor* being the most famous of them: through the open window shines the iridescent dappled light of a spring day, and Kerr comes unexpectedly upon his fiancée – who is seen from behind busy at a work-table – slipping in through a door covered with wallpaper. Later we see Marie preparing the newlyweds' bedroom (*Interior with Red Bed*, IV-133) and Madame Vuillard proffering her final words of advice on the wedding day (*A Little Chat*, IV-134). 1893 was certainly a year for weddings in Vuillard's circle: Misia and Thadée Natanson in April and Maurice Denis and Marthe in June. In a letter to Jan Verkade he reports news of his Nabi friends, not without a certain bitterness: 'We see little of Sérusier, who is under the spell of a vamp, but we mustn't be indiscreet, he should tell you about it himself; but we still have our get-togethers at Ranson's – his studio had become ever more welcoming to the Nabis. As you know, there are married men amongst them. This does not change the rest of our lives. I myself feel terribly single I say this with some discomfort, for I have a vague tendency to consider it monstrous'.<sup>19</sup> 'Terribly single' he was to remain all his life.

People crowded into the Vuillard's apartment to welcome the young couple. The painter of the *Desmarais Panels* could

now see his friend every day under the same roof. Kerr had officially become his brother. The discovery of certain turbulent events in Vuillard's life – which had been rather too readily classified as untroubled<sup>20</sup> – has enabled us to pinpoint the true iconographic significance of a number of his paintings without in any way detracting from their 'abstract' power, the hermetic quality of their formal structure or the charm of their colour schemes.<sup>21</sup> Not only did Vuillard register what he saw, but *he instigated what he was going to paint*. This approach is much more unusual in the history of painting.

The little family that moved in with the Vuillards was thereafter to experience only highs and lows, recorded in every detail with precision and cynicism by the artist. In December 1894 a cruel blow fell: his sister gave birth to a still-born son (see IV-161 to IV-165). He expressed his grief in a letter to Alexandre Natanson: 'My poor sister has been through a grave crisis and at one point we thought we had lost her'.<sup>22</sup> He made several sketches in pen and Indian ink wash: they are of the Tuileries (see ill.) where the ladies are wearing their winter coats, doctor's stills, bottles (see ill.), Marie huddled in bed, and the doctor in his pince-nez preparing an injection for the sufferer (see ill.).<sup>23</sup> Many years later Vuillard still remembered it all: '94 [...] albumen Marie's agonizing labour'.<sup>24</sup> For he had hoped, by means of Roussel and Marie, to have in his home a child with whom he could have spent time. Naturally this disaster did not mend matters between Kerr and Marie: '95 complications in the Roussel couple'<sup>25</sup>, he admitted. The turn of phrase is curt, to say the least. In 1895 Kerr tried on several occ-



E. V., *Les Tuileries*, 1894, facsimile of the 'Carnet Saint-Honoré'.



E. V., *Bedside Table by Marie's Sickbed*, 1894, facsimile of the 'Carnet Saint-Honoré'.



E. V., *The Doctor's Call*, 1894, facsimile of the 'Carnet Saint-Honoré'.



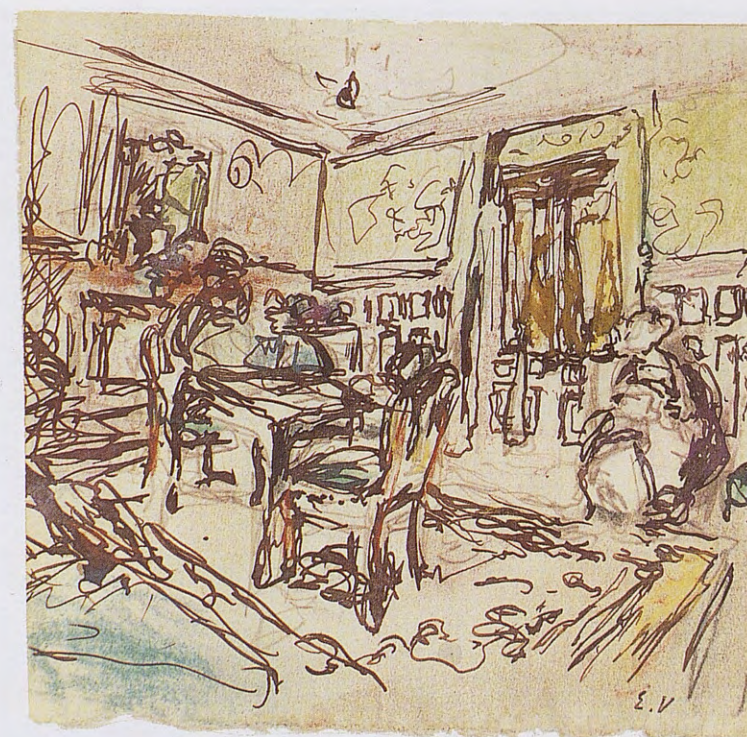


Félix Vallotton, *Woman in a Purple Dress by Lamplight*, 1898, tempera on cardboard. Private collection.

asions to leave Marie, having fallen in love some time previously, at first discreetly and then quite openly, with France Ranson's sister, the beautiful Germaine Rousseau, known to the entire Nabi circle. Once again it was the Salomon archives that enabled us to put together the puzzle of this scandal, which was hushed up so well for so long. It weighed on Vuillard's conscience for two or three years, but on the other hand it inspired some of the most intense and complex works he had yet painted (See IV-211, IV-213, IV-215, IV-217 and IV-218). There are a series of tense dinners where no one speaks (IV-212) and Roussel pays no attention to those around him – *Family Evening* (IV-211) is the best example. Vuillard did not scruple to show the desperately lonely Marie staring sadly out of the window or sewing to take her mind off her unhappiness (IV-205, IV-208 and IV-209). In my opinion *Woman in Blue* is a caricature of a brief scene in which four women are gossiping about 'the Kerr-Germaine affair' in the Ransons' drawing room; France explodes with rage.

But most importantly, the iconographic significance of *Large Interior with Six Figures* in Zurich (IV-215), about which all the experts have remained mute, is clearly a scene at the Ransons' on Boulevard Montparnasse during which Madame Vuillard and Paul Ranson insisted that Germaine Rousseau should leave Kerr-Xavier Roussel. Starting from a painting by Vallotton, *Woman in a Purple Dress by Lamplight* (see ill.), in which can be seen in the background what

we believe to be an early version of *Large Interior*, we have formed the hypothesis that Vuillard may have erased his brother-in-law, perhaps to attenuate the excessive emotional content of the canvas and make it suitable for exhibition at the Galerie Vollard in 1897, at a time when the small circle of intimates of Ranson and Roussel knew of the affair and could identify the protagonists. Clearly, Vuillard would go to any lengths. Eventually he and his mother managed to patch things up with the young couple, and the year 1896 dawned much more happily for the Roussels, who were expecting another child. The birth of 'Petit-Jean' in August 1896 was one of the greatest joys of Vuillard's life. But once again fate took a hand, and the baby died a month later, in September of the same year, while Vuillard was away on holiday with the Natansons and Mallarmé at Valvins. This blow produced one of the most shattering paintings imaginable, *Married Life* (IV-217), in which Kerr and Marie, newly settled in at 15 Place Dauphine, stare mutely into space beside a child's now unnecessary highchair. It is not until the strange *Interior, Mystery* (IV-218) that he shows the emptiness left by the vanished baby. Once again the leaden atmosphere that Vuillard chose to infuse into these private moments, the sense of a scene frozen in an instant of intensity, are strongly reminiscent of Ibsen's tense dramas, in which the determinism of heredity plays a major role (*Ghosts*, *Hedda Gabler*). This belief was one of the Nabi painter's most deeply rooted convictions.



E.V., *Madame Vuillard, rue Truffaut*, c. 1898, ink and pastel on paper, 11.7 x 12 cm. Private collection.

Among commentators on Vuillard's work during these remarkable years, Léon-Paul Fargue was certainly the one who saw and described most specifically the theatrical nature of Vuillard's pictorial productions: 'Finally, about Édouard Vuillard, the unquestioned master who works on scenery at L'Œuvre: characters in their own house prowling round wolf-like, with in the background the angel of the hearth, seeming to follow them in their shadow. The feeling that each character is rehearsing a part and practising with accessories for the play of life'.<sup>26</sup> Patiently, on tiptoe, Vuillard had finally created a world that was his alone.

<sup>1</sup> Chastel 1946, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 27 July 1894, I.2, fol. 46r.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 11 November 1908, II.2, fol. 12v.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 13 July 1894, I.2, fol. 43r. We do not know what it is about.

<sup>5</sup> Aurier 1995, p. 118.

<sup>6</sup> 'À propos de l'exposition d'Armand Séguin', *La Plume*, 1 March 1895, in Denis 1913, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Odilon Redon, *À soi-même. Journal 1867-1915*, José Corti, Paris, 2000, p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, preface to his *Théâtre*, Geneva, 1979, pp. III-IV.

<sup>9</sup> Cogeval 1984, pp. 181-197.

<sup>10</sup> Jules Lemaitre, *Impressions de théâtre*, 8<sup>e</sup> series, Paris, 1895, p. 145.

<sup>11</sup> Only Belinda Thomson refers to this, in a few lines, in Thomson 1988, p. 36. In his autobiographical notes on 11 November 1908, Vuillard still remembers: '92 [...] Kerr and Caro. Go to Belgium, Holland and London'; E. V., *Journal*, II.2, fol. 12v. Things seem to have gone quite far between Kerr and Caroline, since in a letter from Henry Roussel, Kerr's brother, to Vuillard (late November 1892, Salomon archives), there is a reference to moving her furniture.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Vuillard to Pierre Bonnard, 9 November 1892, priv. coll., Fontainebleau. The letter is annoyingly cut in Terrasse, 2001, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Maurice Denis to Vuillard and Kerr-Xavier Roussel, 11 November 1892,

Salomon archives. Bombs were going off everywhere at the time, and Ravachol had been arrested in March 1892.

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Pierre Bonnard to Vuillard, 12 November 1892, Salomon archives.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Madame Vuillard to her son, 17 November 1892, Salomon archives.

<sup>16</sup> Natanson 1948a, p. 344.

<sup>17</sup> Letter from Alexandre Vuillard to Vuillard, 8 June 1893, Salomon archives.

<sup>18</sup> Natanson 1948a, p. 351.

<sup>19</sup> Letter from Vuillard to Jan Verkade, 1 January 1894, priv. coll.

<sup>20</sup> We make no exceptions.

<sup>21</sup> Thus, *The Suitor* was exhibited with this title at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery in January 1938. And yet seven years later, Claude Roger-Marx calls it *Intérieur au paravent*, without recognizing Kerr-Xavier Roussel or Marie: 'In the centre, a screen opens to show the head and shoulders of a young man who is inquisitive about this bustle, these fabrics and these lights'; Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Vuillard to Alexandre Natanson, 24 November 1894, published in Melot 1948b, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> These drawings formerly constituted part of a notebook we have never had in our hands. It was broken up and the pages sold separately in the 1980s. Fortunately, Jacques Salomon and Annette Vaillant have published a facsimile of the notebook: *Édouard Vuillard. Cahiers de dessins*, Quatre-Chemins-Éditart, Paris, 1950.

<sup>24</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 11 November 1908, II.2, fol. 12v.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., fol. 13v.

<sup>26</sup> Léon-Paul Fargue, 'Peinture (chez Le Barc de Bouteville)', *L'Art littéraire*, December 1893.



## IV-1

## Dinner Time (study)

c. 1891

Oil on cardboard, 17 × 22 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 26 Nov. 1971, lot 186 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *In a room, two women in black are seen against the light issuing from a source concealed by their silhouettes; to the right is a third figure holding a loaf of bread. Red highlights. A rather odd scene that is a sketch for the following entry, which helps to explain it.* (AC)



IV-1

*an angle from the wall casts its yellow light on the back of the room. A veiled woman hovers near the centre, with a young girl holding a loaf of bread on the right; the head of a man with beady black eyes appears in the doorway. A black bottle stands on the round, brown table beneath a green hanging lamp on the left. Even detailed in this manner, this scene with its sombre tones remains somewhat strange.* (AC)

## IV-2

## Dinner Time

c. 1889

Oil on canvas, 71.8 × 92.2 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 101.1961

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Gift from Mr and Mrs Sam Salz with an anonymous donor to The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1961.

**Exhibitions:** Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 2 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 36 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona, 1990-91, no. 34, pp. 116-117 (col. ill.) – Montreal, 1998, no. 155, p. 22 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 50 – Salomon 1961, p. 24 (ill.) – 'Paintings and Sculpture', *The Museum of Modern Art Supplement*, Jan.-Dec. 1961, p. 11 – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 20 – Salomon 1968, p. 42 (ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, pp. 16-17 – Mauner 1978, p. 265, fig. 149 – Georges 1982, pl. 102 – Daniel 1984, pp. 165, 167, fig. 60 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 123-129, fig. 32 – Easton 1989, pp. 58, 60, 62 – Exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, Cogeval, p. 118, and Dumas, p. 63 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 40-41 (col. ill.), 43 – Cogeval, exhib. cat., Montreal, 1998, pp. 114-115 – Kahng 1999-2000, exhib. cat., San Francisco-Dallas-Bilbao, p. 255 (ill.).

**Description:** *The woman on the left bends over an oil lamp, a lit match in her hand, her face reddened by the flame. A candle beneath a painting hung at*

This unusual and blood-curdling composition was long thought to be a reworking of some seventeenth-century tenebrist model, and in particular of Le Sueur (Salomon, Russell). It is certainly one of the artist's frankest confessions regarding the manner in which he perceived himself in relation to his family. In this 'screening' of the artist's home life, he is obstructed by the trio of women who stand physically in his way; indeed, he is all but obliterated by a grotesque allegory of the three ages (even his sister has a devilish expression on her face). In addition to being 'cancelled out' in this way, his own gaze, as he looks into the room, is horror-stricken, like some figure out of Edgar Allen Poe or, better still, Maurice Beaubourg, whose short stories about characters gradually possessed by hysteria he was particularly fond of. Let us also

E. V., *Journal*, I.1, fol. 20v. (2 Dec. 1888).

recall that the leading role in Rachilde's *L'Araignée de cristal* ('The crystal spider'), which Lugné-Poe staged at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre in February 1894 with stage-sets by Vuillard, was known as 'L'Épouvanté' ('the Terror-Stricken').

Faced with this maternal triad lined up like figures in a coconut shy and filling the entire composition, Vuillard seems to shrink into the background. Might these three Fates be about to perform some ritual sacrifice with the aid of their monstrous implements? The lamp on the far left, so disproportionately large that we scarcely recognize it as such;



IV-2

the skewed painting that looks as if it is about to topple from the wall; the widow's veil; the wine bottle; the flame and the matchstick: each of these items is curiously 'unhinged', like some insidious allusion to the artist's sacrificed virility.

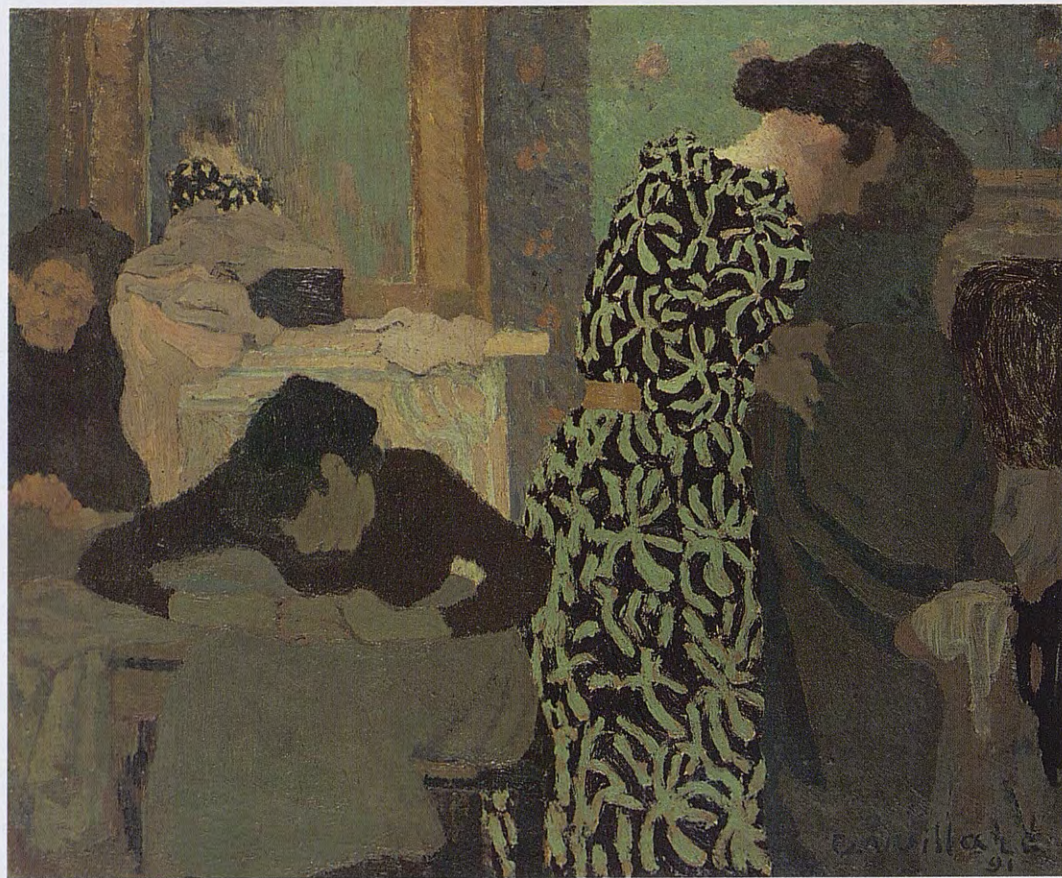
The notion of sacrifice is further underscored by the presence of the bread and wine. The whole composition seems to resonate with the fear of castration and the artist's preposterous feeling of guilt. Fortunately, dread is not alone here; there is a comical element to contend with as well, since it is a paltry candle (a foretoken of Père Ubu's green candle?) that is the source of this ghastly *contre-jour*. This is the first of

Vuillard's great paintings to attempt to settle scores with motherhood, with womanhood in general, with family life and, above all one suspects, with himself. It goes without saying that this outburst of controlled madness is also one of the high points of 'black' Symbolism.

The date traditionally ascribed to this work has recently been pushed back on the grounds of possible affinities in atmosphere with Symbolist drama (see Bibliography: Cogeval, Dumas) – as if the composition of the painting could only have sprung from Vuillard's experience in painting theatre décors. A careful examination of the artist's *Journal*, however, reveals several sketches of

interiors at night in which the same type of lighting is used. One in particular, dated 2 December 1888 (see ill.), offers a number of similarities with *Dinner Time*. For this reason we are inclined to revert to the date put forward by Jacques Salomon (c. 1889). Long before experimenting with *pointilliste* and *cloisonniste* ideas, Vuillard already bore within himself that sombre, gothic vision of the world that Symbolist theatre would allow him to bring into the open.





IV-3

## IV-3

## The Floral-Pattern Dress

1891

Oil on canvas, 38 × 46 cm

Signed and dated, lower right:

*e. vuillard / 91*

Inscribed on rear: *Vuillard, 28 rue Pigalle*  
**Museu de Arte de São Paulo, São Paulo**  
 (Brazil), 129/1958

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York,  
 c. 1950 – Museu de Arte de São Paulo, São Paulo.

**Exhibitions:** Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Château  
 National, 1891, no. 258 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948  
 (not in cat.) – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 33 (ill.),  
 100 – Düsseldorf, Kunsthalle, 1954, no. 86 (ill.) –  
 London, Tate Gallery, June-August 1954, no. 66 –  
 Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1954-55, no. 90 (ill.) – New  
 York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1957, no. 66  
 (ill.) – Martigny, Gianadda, 1988, p. 248 (col. ill.) –  
 Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90,  
 no. 20 (col. ill.) – Zurich, 1993, no. 149 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1945, p. 12 (ill.) – Chastel  
 1946, pp. 23 (ill.), 46, 61; and 1948, p. 4, col. pl.  
 IV – Schweicher 1949, pp. 21-24, 27, 28, 33, 35,  
 36, 43, 72, 93-94, 96, 103-104, 124 – Salomon  
 1961, pp. 34, 35 (ill.) – Bacou 1964, p. 193 – São  
 Paulo 1973, p. 104 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 103,

114, fig. 58 – Mauner 1978, pp. 212, 258, 260,  
 fig. 140 – Georges 1982, p. 44 – Daniel 1984,  
 pp. 44, 146, fig. 4 – Thomson 1988, p. 165, pl. 10  
 – Warnod 1988, pp. 21 (col. ill.), 23 – *L'Œil*, nos.  
 396-397, July-August 1988, p. 23, fig. 5 – Easton  
 1989, pp. 39-41 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 21  
 (ill.), cover (col. ill.) – Forgione 1992, pp. 97, 118,  
 fig. 54 – Ellridge 1993, pp. 96-97 (col. ill.).

**Description:** Three women are busy sewing; two of  
 them are seated on the left, their faces and hands rendered  
 in shadowy tones, while the third stands in the  
 light, clad in a vividly patterned, dark-blue dress. She  
 holds a dark dress in her hands, with a bright collar  
 and buttons. Her silhouette is reflected in the mirror  
 above the pale-coloured fireplace. This is one of the first  
 compositions in which the artist uses an effect he will  
 seek to reproduce often in the future. (AC)

Even if we agree with Elizabeth Easton that  
 Vuillard invites us here to enter a room, or,  
 to be more precise, the corner of a room (as  
 the difference in lighting on the wallpaper  
 would seem to indicate), it is obvious that the  
 room has been flattened so as to reduce every-  
 thing to a plane that lies parallel with the pic-  
 ture-surface. In the process, the artist has quite  
 simply eliminated the real or apparent depth  
 of the room, which was almost certainly locat-  
 ed in the rue de Miromesnil. 'Each of the three  
 figures is isolated against a different back-



Giovanni Girolamo Salvoldo, *Portrait of Bernardo di Salla*, oil on panel, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

ground, but the actual position of each with-  
 in the room is difficult to make out.' Between  
*Grand-mère* Michaud to the left and Marie  
 Vuillard to the right (the latter attired in  
 the same floral-pattern dress she wears in  
*The Family after the Meal*, IV-4), a seamstress  
 is shown bent over her work. Her size gives  
 one to think that she is located in the mid-  
 dle ground, but her left elbow juts out in front  
 of Marie's dress, thereby creating a perplex-  
 ing spatial distortion: 'Without ceasing to be  
 flat and ornamental, the painting allows a  
 mere hint of space to enter through the reflec-  
 tion in the mirror, giving it an air of depth.'<sup>1</sup>  
 Of mystery as well, one might add, for Marie's  
 reflection in the mirror above the fireplace is  
 equally intriguing. Given the position of the  
 painter's sister relative to ours, it is her left  
 sleeve that should be reflected; what we see  
 instead is a reflection of her right sleeve. This  
 device tells us what *is taking place* in the room  
 rather than what the artist *sees* there; Vuillard  
 does not yet bring his legendary attention to  
 bear on the likenesses of things; instead he  
 makes visible the transformations of space  
 effected by the presence of the figures in the  
 room. He can hardly have been unaware of  
 the fact that, ever since the Renaissance, the  
 presence of a mirror opening up unexpected  
 depths within a painting had been a way for  
 the artist to trade places for a moment with  
 the sculptor: 'In the portrait said to be of Gas-  
 ton de Foix [see ill.], two mirrors and a reflec-  
 tion on the armour afford us three further  
 views of the model, thereby demonstrating the  
 ability of painting to multiply itself and to rival  
 sculpture in the round (in keeping with the  
 theme of *paragone* [emulation] between the  
 arts).'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chastel 1946, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Philippe Morel, *L'Art italien*, Paris, Citadelles, 1997, p. 499.

## IV-4

The Family after the Meal,  
known as The Green Dinner

1891

Oil on cardboard, 34 × 49.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons,  
 London – Captain Richard A. Peto, Isle of Wight  
 (Great Britain); Mrs Rosemary Peto, London – Pri-  
 vate collection, London.

**Exhibitions:** Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946,  
 no. 42 – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948,  
 no. 59 [*Evening at Home*] – London, Wildenstein,  
 June 1948, no. 4 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 5  
 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 13 [*Intérieur Vert*,  
 c. 1895] – Paris, Charpentier, June-Oct. 1950,  
 no. 187 – London, Tooth & Sons, 1952, no. 16 (ill.)  
 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 36 (ill.), 101 –  
 Plymouth, City Museum, 1960, no. 83 – Munich,  
 Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 9 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie,  
 1968, no. 10 (ill.) – London, Tooth & Sons, April-  
 May 1969, no. 2 (ill.) – Toronto-San Francisco-  
 Chicago, 1971-72, no. III (col. ill.) – London, Royal  
 Academy, 1979-80, no. 235 (ill.) – Washington  
 D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1980, no. 146 (ill.)  
 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90,  
 no. 38 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam,

1991-92, p. 20, no. 13 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris,  
 1993-94, no. 150 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 49-50, 85  
 (ill.); and 1948c, pl. 16 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 72-  
 73, 93-96 – Salomon 1961, p. 30 (ill.); and 1968,  
 p. 48 (ill.) – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 130-131, fig. 85  
 – Georges 1982, p. 62 – Daniel 1984, pp. 44, 99,  
 139, 146, fig. 5 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 129-130, fig. 37  
 – Warnod 1988, pp. 23, 24 (col. ill.) – Easton 1989,  
 pp. 60-63 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 22 (ill.)  
 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 133 (ill.) – Sidlauskas 1998,  
 pp. 100-101 (ill.).

In the previous entry, *The Floral-Pattern Dress*  
 (IV-3), the artist focused on the figures  
 absorbed in their work; here his attention  
 shifts to the effect of yellow light, which intro-  
 duces an unsettling note into an otherwise  
 tranquil scene. A hanging lamp casts its bright  
 glare over the artist's family (*Grand-mère*  
 Michaud – or might it be his *Tante Saurel*? –  
 his mother, his sister Marie and his brother  
 Alexandre), enlivening an otherwise dreary  
 scene. The base of the lamp forms a black  
 square from which a murky flame shoots up,  
 as if by magic; there is something unreal about  
 the way it is embedded in the composition,  
 as though an indefinable air of sacredness had  
 stolen into this everyday scene, transforming

it into some 'minor secular rite' (*petite solen-  
 nité profane*).<sup>1</sup>

The effects of the lighting and the somewhat  
 exaggerated postures of the members of the  
 family – the mutely hieratic grandmother, the  
 almost comic contortion of Marie attired in  
 her hard-wearing floral-patterned dress (to  
 which she has pinned a rose), the post-pran-  
 dial silence of Alexandre – are steeped in the  
 conventions of Symbolist theatre, which Vuil-  
 lard was just beginning to explore. Two years  
 later, he was to produce his stunning décors  
 for Hauptmann's *Solitary Souls*, which opened  
 on 13 December 1893 at the Théâtre des  
 Bouffes du Nord. Alfred Jarry would pay com-  
 ical tribute to them by laying stress on the very  
 qualities that were already present in *The  
 Green Dinner*: 'Ideas flit and pad about, inspir-  
 ing actors perfectly suited to the work  
 intended, in the half-mourning of the green  
 Lamp [suspended] above the red tables  
 where Vuillard has illuminated the vegetable-  
 like existence that brings such pallor to  
 Kaethe's hands.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Jarry, *L'Art littéraire*, Jan.-Feb. 1894, p. 25.



IV-4





IV-5

#### IV-5 The Visit

c. 1891  
Oil on canvas, 18.5 × 23 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 16 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 17 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 9 – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-64, no. 305 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 4 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 19 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 29 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1961, p. 25 (col. ill.); and 1968, p. 43 (col. ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, p. 29 – Georges 1982, p. 65 – Daniel 1984, p. 60, fig. 15.

**Description:** Three elderly women seated, in conversation, the one in the middle wearing a red dress. In the background, to the right, is a red curtain and, to the left, a yellow screen. (JS)

Rather than 'the three ages' of Vuillard's life (Marie, Madame Vuillard and *Grand-mère* Michaud) depicted in *Dinner Time* (IV-2), this quick sketch in which 'the face is at once composed and distorted with grief without ever settling into a [firm] outline'<sup>1</sup> would seem to depict a female visitor seated in a large arm-chair. A quick glance might lead one to suppose she is *Grand-mère* Michaud; the woman in question, however, is wearing a caplet – a forerunner of today's overcoat and not at all a garment of solemn mourning – and must be paying a visit, therefore. The violet robe worn by Madame Vuillard *mère*, on the other hand, was often associated with mourning in the 1880s and 1890s. It would seem that the artist's mother and sister are engaged in conversation with a friend or client. The screen unfolded in the background indicates they are in a corner of the drawing-room where visitors could be received without being exposed to all the all-too-visible disorder of the dress-making studio, and where the latest gossip

could be exchanged in perfect tranquillity. With no less skill than Daumier – or, more to the point, his future friend, Félix Vallotton, whose *Malicious Gossip* (see ill.) is bitchier still – Vuillard shows in a quick sketch of this kind that he is able to set down a social scene in just a few strokes. He will return to this favourite theme in 1898 in *The Widow's Visit* (VII-13), a work more finished than the present composition but no less of a caricature.

<sup>1</sup> Daniel 1984, p. 60.



Félix Vallotton, *Malicious Gossip*, 1902, tempera on cardboard. Private collection.

#### IV-6 The Young Fornachon Ladies Visiting

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 32.5 × 36.5 cm, oval  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York, 1954 – Private collection – Sale, Christie's, London, 29 Nov. 1993, lot 13 (col. ill.) – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 120.

**Description:** Two identically dressed women in blue are seated on a grey, floral-pattern sofa. To the left is a lady in brown partly hidden by another lady seated in the foreground in an ochre-coloured chair, wearing a light dress, her hair pulled back in a very large chignon. The group is rounded out by the silhouette of this last figure, who is depicted making a movement with her arms. A brown curtain on the right and, to the left, a brown chest or cabinet with a yellow cloth. Greyish-green carpet, pink wall. (AC)

Condensed into an oval, this composition is even more witty and disjointed than the preceding sketch. The calligraphic flourishes on the sofa and the drolly twisted arm of the woman in white, who is seen from the



IV-6

back in the midst of a lively conversation, make this sketch one of the most successful of Vuillard's caricatures.



IV-7

#### IV-7 The Light Refreshment

c. 1890-91  
Oil on cardboard, 23 × 26 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Japan

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Roland, Browse & Delbanco, London – Sir Alec Guinness, Great Britain – Sale, Christie's, London, 9 July 1971, lot 202 (ill.) – Jan Krugier, Geneva – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 6 June 1972, lot 30 (col. ill.), bought in – Nichido Gallery, Tokyo – Private collection, Japan.

**Description:** Two women identically dressed in black and each wearing a grey apron are seated by two cups. The tones of the composition are muted, the forms caricatured. Brown background. (AC)





IV-8

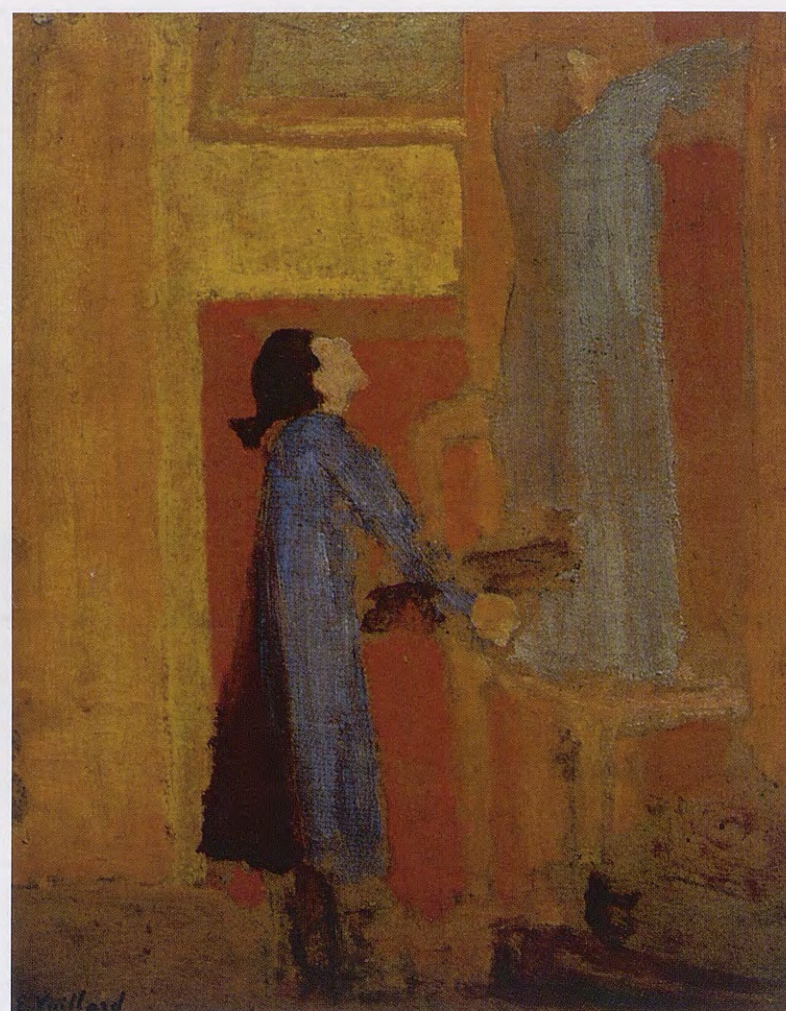
#### IV-8 Two Women against an Orange-Coloured Background

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 20 x 20 cm  
Stamp I, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Hanover, London – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – E. J. Power, London, 1954 – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Dr Kroch, Great Britain, 1972 – JPL Fine Arts, London, 1991 – Harrison Ford, United States, 1992 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** London, Hanover, 1948, no. 17 – London, Tooth & Sons, April-May 1969, no. 14 (ill.) [*La Grand-Mère*].

**Description:** An elderly woman with a grossly exaggerated profile sits sewing by a lamp that casts an oblique light on the tapestry and imparts an orange tone to her face. A second woman stands watching while tying her apron strings behind her back. (AC)



IV-9

*Grand-mère* Michaud shows a stitch to Marie, who is tying her apron. The lamp-light divides the wallpaper into two severely partitioned areas of colour, imparting a fantastic atmosphere to the scene.

#### IV-9 The Apprentices

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 30 x 23.5 cm  
Stamp I, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Galerie Zack, Paris – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Los Angeles-San Francisco-Cleveland, 1965, no. 22 (ill.) – University Park, The Pennsylvania State University, 1968, no. 8 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 18 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 44, p. 165 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Mauner 1963-64, p. 103, fig. 14; and 1978, p. 256, fig. 13 – Georges 1982, p. 167

– Easton 1989, p. 38 – Makarius 1989, pp. 62-63, 69 (col. ill.) – Forgione 1992, pp. 41, 118, fig. 3 – Ellridge 1993, p. 95 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A lemon-yellow and orange-coloured interior, with two girls seen in profile. The one in a pale-green dress is perched on a chair, putting away in a cupboard on the right pieces of material that the other, a younger girl in a blue apron over a dark-red dress, is handing to her. (AC)

Two young seamstresses from Madame Vuillard's dressmaking studio are busy putting away lengths of fabric in a drawer. Their child-like appearance – their smocks are similar to those worn by schoolchildren – are accentuated by their joint efforts at reaching upward. This is particularly true of the girl standing on the chair, who is too short to see into the drawer in which she is placing the material. The composition has a nobility that transfigures their simple, everyday gestures. The red and yellow background recalls the frescos of Pompeii. One of the girls is probably the apprentice Vuillard is seen tenderly embracing in *The Kiss* (II-21).

#### IV-10 The Green Interior

1891  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 31.1 x 21 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 91*  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art,  
New York, Robert Lehman Collection,  
1975.1.222

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Robert Lehman, New York – Lehman bequest to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1975.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 54 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 17 – Cincinnati, Art Museum, 1959, no. 170 – New York, Bronx County Courthouse, 1974, no. 15 – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 147 (col. ill.).

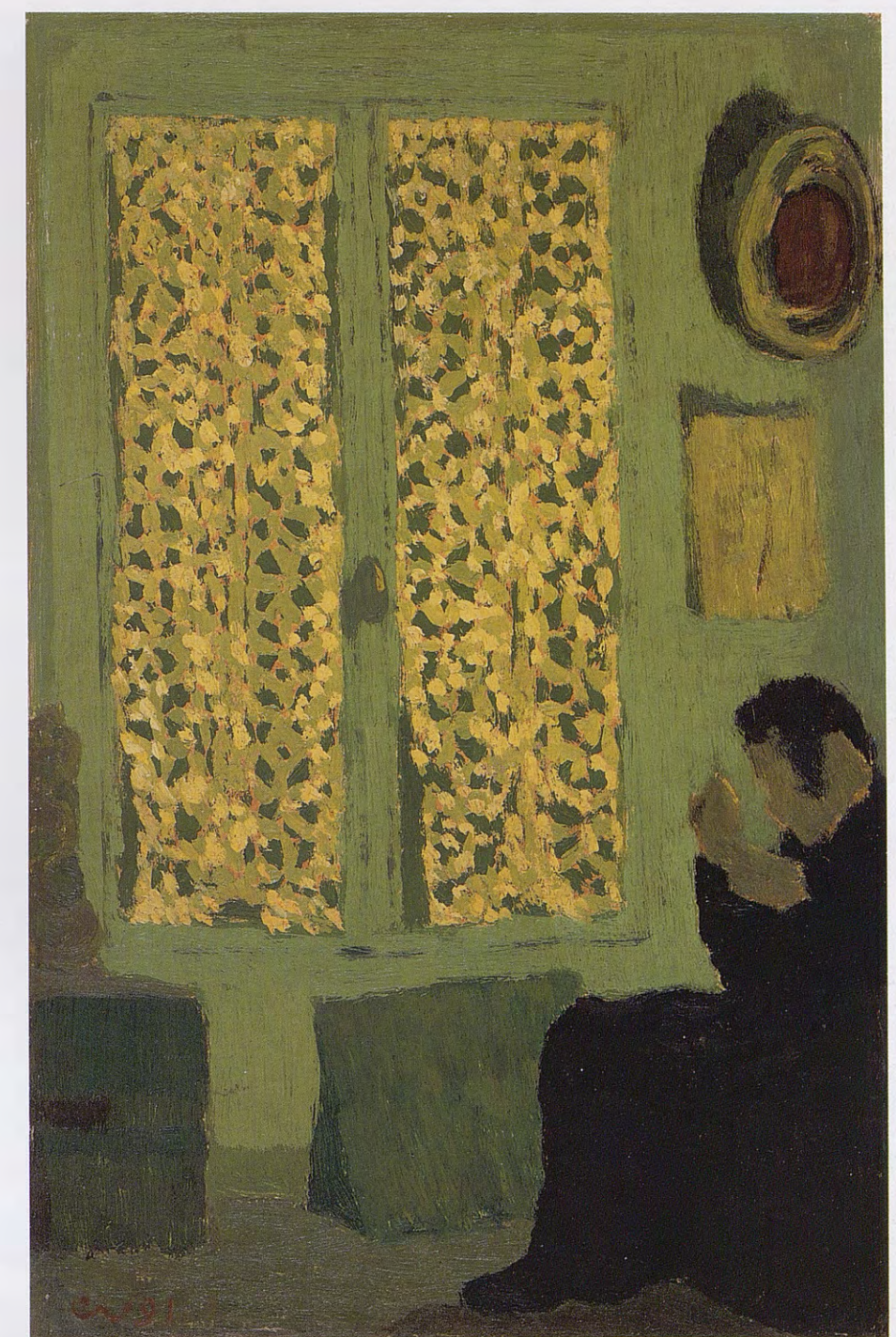
**Bibliography:** Chastel 1948, p. 5, col. pl. III; and 1954, p. 41 (col. ill.) – Szabo 1975, p. 95, no. 103 – Oakley 1981, p. 9, col. pl. 6 – Georges 1982, p. 77 – Daniel 1984, p. 207, fig. 69 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 78-81, fig. 1 – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 312.

**Description:** The composition revolves around the green-speckled curtains and the plain yellow wall. The dark silhouette of the figure on the right appears to be threading a needle. (AC)

Vuillard once again sketches a mysterious poem on the nocturnal power of green, which Ursula Perucchi-Petri rightly associates with the theatre of Maurice Maeterlinck. A lamp blocked out by the figure on the right lights up the curtains and objects on the wall. The figure's identity remains a mystery, but given the cut of the hair and the presence of sideburns – a hangover from



E. V., sketch for  
*The Green Interior*,  
watercolour on paper,  
24.5 x 14.5.  
Private collection.



IV-10

the Biedermeier style then in vogue among Beaux-Arts students – it is more likely to be a man than a woman. A preparatory watercolour (no. 59 in the 1998 Florence catalogue) confirms the figure's masculine identity, even though it is a rather sketchy composition (see ill.). An unpublished drawing very much in the style of the sketches Vuillard made in 1890 and 1891 shows a more detailed profile of a young man (possibly Cipa Godebski) very similar to the one in the painting (see ill.). The sitter appears to be examining an object from

close up, like a connoisseur equipped with a magnifying glass. The portfolio placed beneath the window would seem to bear out this interpretation.



E. V., *Profile of a Man*,  
c. 1890-91, graphite  
on paper, 14 x 11 cm.  
Private collection.





IV-11

#### IV-11 The Oval Woman Darning

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 28.5 × 24 cm, oval  
Signed, upper left: *ev*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Alfred Athis Natanson, Paris; Denise Tabah (née Natanson), Rueil-Malmaison (France) – Mlle Florence Seminario, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 12 April 1972, lot 25 (col. ill.) – E. V. Thaw, New York – Art Council Establishment, Vaduz – Private collection, 1984.

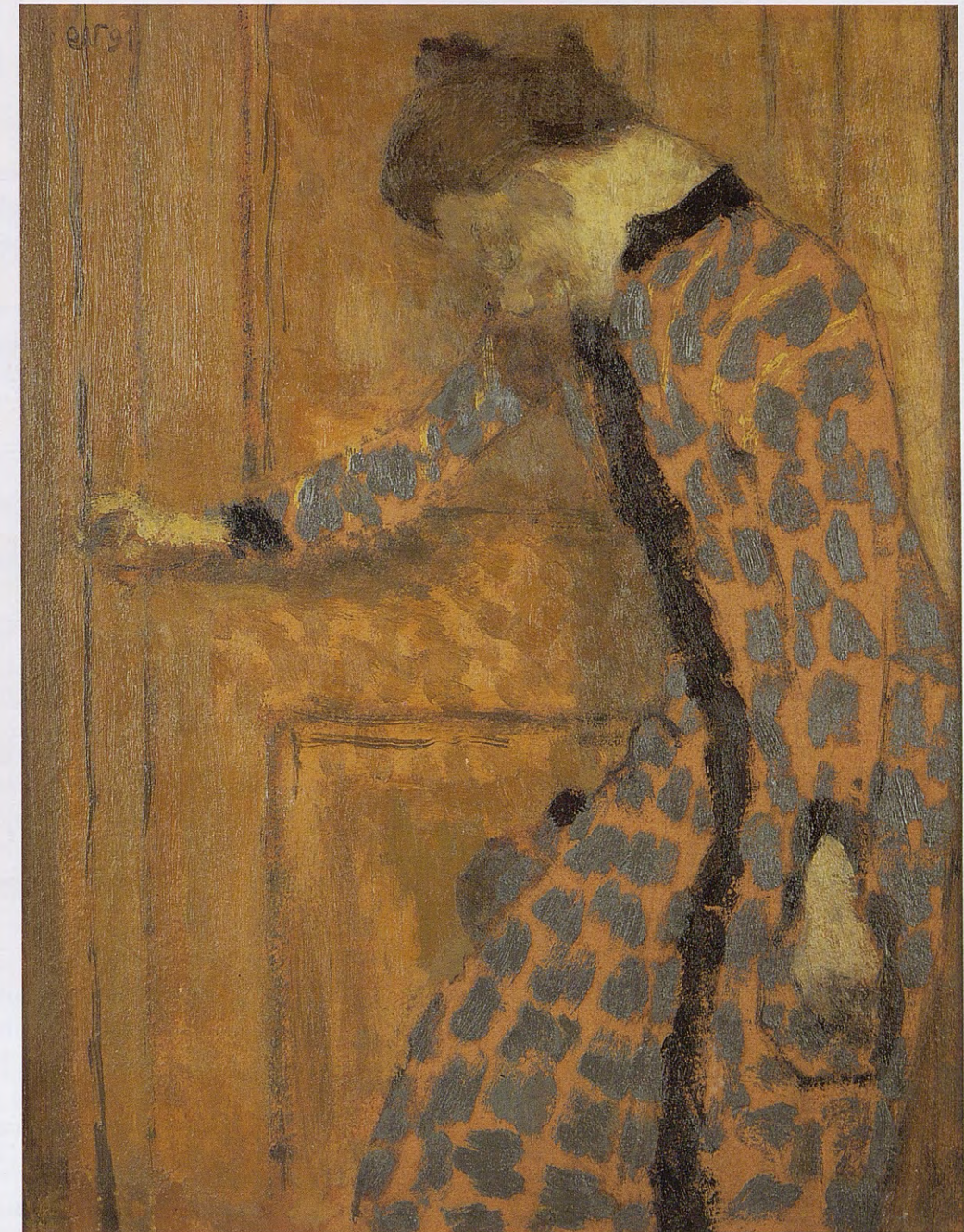
**Exhibitions:** Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 52 [*La Raccommodeuse*] – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 213 – Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 58 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 11 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 10 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Guy 1965, p. 37 (col. ill.) – Mauner 1978, pp. 235, 302 note 33, fig. 88 – Georges 1982, p. 42 – Daniel 1984, p. 389, fig. 141 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 192-194, fig. 77 – Easton 1989, pp. 26, 36 – Ellridge 1993, p. 90 (col. ill.).

**Description:** Against a dull yellow background, a woman in black, with a white collar and beige-coloured hair, is sewing a delicate blue fabric draped over a chair. To the left, a black cloth hangs over the back of the chair. The canvas is oval-shaped. (JS)

As Kozlov, Ciaffa and Cousseau have rightly intuited, Vuillard associates the act of sewing with the act of painting. It can be viewed as a metaphor for the artist's work and for the succession of moments that make up the continuous thread of time. Here, in what is an unusual format for Vuillard, the division of the flat areas forms both a clock and a palette, as though in anticipation of Bergson's insight that 'perception arranges space to the precise extent to which action arranges time'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Henri Bergson, *Matière et mémoire*, 7th edition, Paris, 1911, p. 29 of the foreword.



IV-12

#### IV-12 Young Girl, Her Hand on a Doorknob

1891  
Oil on cardboard, 29.2 × 20.3 cm  
Signed and dated, upper left: *ev 91*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Private collection, Paris – Valentine Gallery, New York – Donald and Jean Stralem Collection, New York, c. 1948 – Stralem sale, Sotheby's, New York, 8 May 1995, lot 41 (col. ill.) – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Seligmann, 1948, no. 4 [*Femme à la porte*] – New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1949 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 100 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 12 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** *Art News* 48, Sept. 1949, p. 22 (ill.) – Easton 1989, p. 30 – Forgione 1992, pp. 41, 118, fig. 11 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 65 (col. ill.) – Sidlauskas 1997, p. 99.

**Description:** A girl seen in profile, in a checked housecoat trimmed with black, her face curiously bowed, her right arm extended and her hand resting on a doorknob. (JS)

This is clearly Marie with her hair pulled back in a chignon, reaching out tentatively in a

touching gesture of modesty, her faun-like smile all but obscured by her *profil perdu* as she prepares to open a door. The delicate movement of the shoulder (see also *Woman in Profile Wearing a Green Hat*, II-79) is that of a person trying to escape a camera lens or the gaze of a brother who spends his time observing you. The artist transforms this fleeting gesture into a subtle pantomime of shyness.





IV-13

#### IV-13 Marie at the Door

c. 1891-92  
Pastel on paper, dimensions unknown  
Stamp 2, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.



IV-14

#### IV-14 Marie in an Orange- Coloured Housecoat

c. 1891  
Pastel on cardboard, 42 x 25 cm  
Signed, lower right: EV  
Private collection, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hector Brame, Paris – Private collection, London.

**Description:** A woman stands with her back to us in a patterned peignoir. In the face and hair, tinged with yellow and blue, Vuillard experiments with chromatics. (AC)

#### IV-15 Half-Open Door

1891  
Oil on cardboard, 27.5 x 22.5 cm  
Signed and dated, upper right: *ev 91*  
**Fondation Angladon-Dubrujeaud,**  
**Avignon (France), K91**

**Provenance:** Collection Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 39 [*La Porte entrebâillée*] – Jacques Doucet, Paris, 520 F – Dubrujeaud, Paris – Fondation Angladon-Dubrujeaud, Avignon.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 23 – Paris, Berès, May 1957, no. 63 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 8 – St. Tropez, 2000, no. 9, p. 46 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Fénéon 1921, p. 316 (ill.) – Chastel 1946, pp. 15 (ill.), 46-47 – Jalard 1966, p. 61 – *Réalités*, no. 269, June 1968, p. 64 (col. ill.) – Fénéon 1970, vol. I, p. 255 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, p. 106, fig. 61 – Georges 1982, pp. 48, 60, 69, 155 – Daniel 1984, p. 52, fig. 10 – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 305, fig. 1.

Only recently has this *Half-Open Door* been restored to its rightful measure of fame. Originally in the collection of Thadée Natanson, it early on attracted the attention of Félix Fénéon: 'A young woman in a peignoir with a printed pattern of crescents slips into a study lined with flowery wallpaper. All we see is her head, the front of her body and a hand. Below, in the bottom left corner, is a hassock. (An example of the painter's early manner. The forms here are mainly ornamental. It has been said of this technique that it absorbs objects, notably the human figure, into an atmosphere, just as in a certain kind of music the voice dissolves in the symphony.) Shimmering effects are given by the dabs of pure colour, juxtaposed without intermediary tones – greens, yellows and pinks, blues and yellow-pinks, reds and pale blues – just as the total areas of colour are juxtaposed.'<sup>1</sup> The brilliance of the prevailing yellow tones glorifies Marie's almost bashful appearance on the threshold of the door, as her body slips in between two layers of paint; nevertheless, the problems posed, though identical to those of *The Dressmakers* (II-104), are par-



IV-15

ticularly hermetic. For all its flattening, the surface suggests several layers of painting. The highly elliptical spatial organization foreshadows the more complex *The Suitor* (1893, IV-132). Of all of Vuillard's renderings of female figures hovering into view, this *Half-Open Door* is one of the rare instances when the model appears to be conscious of the artist's presence, even gazing straight into his eyes (other examples are *Marie Bending over Her Work*, IV-17, and, much later on, *Lucie Belin*, X-45).

<sup>1</sup> Félix Fénéon, Thadée Natanson sale, Paris, 1908, p. 20.





IV-16

#### IV-16 Woman Darning

1891  
Oil on cardboard, 27 × 22 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 91*  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1977-393;  
stolen in 1985

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris; Mme Reine Natanson, Paris – Natanson bequest to the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1953 – Transferred from the Musée National d'Art Moderne to the Louvre, 1977; Musée d'Orsay; stolen from the Palais de Tokyo on 6 Nov. 1985.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 45; and 1930, no. 46 – Paris, Druet, 1930, no. 92 – Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 68 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 13 – Cardiff, National Museum of Wales, 1957, no. 79 – London, R.B.A. Galleries, 1957, no. 21 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 10 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 9 (ill.) – Houston-Chicago, 1976, no. 99.

**Bibliography:** – Chastel 1946, pp. 17 (ill.), 46-48, 54, 60 – Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 47 – Schweicher 1949, p. 95 – Cassou, Dorival and Homolle 1954, p. 164 – Humbert 1954b, p. 14 (ill.) – *La Revue des arts*, no. 3, Sept. 1954, p. 171 (ill.) – Schweicher 1955, pl. 3 – Dorival 1961, pp. 37, 273 (ill.), 319 – Russoli 1966, col. pl. 1 – Barilli 1967c, pp. 122, 123 (col. ill.) – Negri

1970, p. 22, col. pl. 39 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 110, 128, 130-131, fig. 81 – Georges 1982, pp. 48, 60, 69 – Daniel 1984, pp. 42, 44, fig. 3 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 172-176, fig. 62 – Makarius 1989, pp. 75, 78 (col. ill.), 80.

**Description:** A young woman in a checked dress, darning a pale-coloured stocking in a room lined with red-and-yellow floral patterned wallpaper. One of the earliest examples of Vuillard's experiments in juxtaposing patterned dresses and the designs on walls. (AC)

Marie, clad in the same housecoat she wears in *Young Girl with Her Hand on a Doorknob* (IV-12), is concentrating upon darning a stocking. The silent self-absorption of her pose contrasts sharply with the violence of the colours surrounding her: 'The wallpaper in the background consists of four shades of sienna, and no fewer than eight shades of green are present in the painting. The white fabric that Marie is darning is the only exception to an otherwise coordinated palette.'<sup>1</sup> The treatment of the concavities and convexities of the dress is almost prying and results in a startling optical illusion or *inganno*: the armchair with its sweeping armrests, between which Marie is seated, could be a fabric cut-out on the flowery wallpaper – a surface upon another surface. This unsettling collage of toned-down colours is clearly an adumbration of Art Nouveau, a point that particularly struck André Chastel: 'Vuillard takes possession [here] of one of his most original techniques. Against a background lined with a wallpaper of yellow flowers, a woman in a chequered dress is darning stockings. The dress and the wall have similar tonal values, the resonance between them extending even to their decorative motifs. Thus, the human figure, which is already depicted in an elliptical foreshortening, tends to blend with the surrounding decor and, unable to hold out any longer, to lose its personality, as it were, amongst the furniture and wallpaper.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ciaffa 1985, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> Chastel 1946, p. 47.



IV-17

#### IV-17 Marie Bending over Her Work

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard, 18.1 × 23.2 cm  
Stamp 2, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Valentine Gallery, New York – Donald and Jean Stralem Collection, New York, c. 1949 – Stralem sale, Sotheby's, New York, 8 May 1995, lot 39 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1949 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 11 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, pp. 29-30.





IV-18

#### IV-18 Mother and Daughter at Table

c. 1891-92  
Oil on hardboard, 37.5 × 27 cm  
Stamp 2, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – M. Payelle, Paris – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 23 Nov. 1972, lot 12 (col. ill.) – Wildenstein, New York – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 10 (col. ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 35 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Romand 1974, p. 91 (ill.), fig. 3 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 130-131, fig. 86 – Terrasse 1980, p. 130, col. pl. 27 – Daniel 1984, pp. 44, 139, 146, fig. 6 – Ciaffa 1985, p. 130,

fig. 39 – Easton 1989, p. 60 – Makarius 1989, pp. 75, 76 (ill.) – Sidlauskas 1997, pp. 99, 100 (ill.).

Vuillard presents us here with a highly sophisticated combination of decorative motifs. One cannot fail to be struck by the contrast between the willowy, bright silver pattern of Marie's dress and the 'brick wall' of her mother's housecoat obstructing the picture space. Marie stands out clearly against a monochrome brown background, as though she were on stage delivering a monologue, in a circle of artificial light beamed by a single spotlight; Madame Vuillard, on the other hand, seems at home in the maze of textures surrounding her, as though the mass of her body fitted naturally into their grid. Once again, Marie is captured in a posture of almost convulsive shyness, her dreamy face turned sharply away in the Japanese manner. Her chalky complexion has a sickly pallor. The overbearing presence of her mother, whose massive bulk slants across the entire space of the composition, is further emphasized by the subtle metaphor for the father implied by the huge, smooth wine bottle, the only element to reflect any light in this atmosphere of silent absorption. Indeed, Marie casts a furtive glance at it. Though many of the details in this picture have a consummate elegance – the apple-green shadow on the foot of Madame Vuillard's chair, for example – the painter cannot help staging a sort of 'painfully slow' dance of death performed by his two favourite models around a family event of disarming simplicity.

The ensuing works, pantomimes of everyday life in which the artist's sister poses as the victim of a despotic mother, constitute a reflection on the art of escaping one's family background through dreams. Recently, Susan Sidlauskas put forward a sophisticated comparison between the contortions to which Vuillard subjects Marie and the 'homosexual' type of approach to the female body in F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* and *Faustus*.



IV-19

#### IV-19 Marie Daydreaming behind Her Mother

c. 1891-92  
Oil on canvas, 64 × 47.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – M. François, Geneva – E. J. Van Wisselingh, Amsterdam – J. De Yong, Amsterdam – Alain Tarica, Paris – Private collection, France.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 26 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 19 [*Femmes dans un intérieur*] (ill.) – Stockholm, Galerie d'Art Latin, 1948, no. 4 [*Deux femmes dans un intérieur*, 1894] – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 14 – New York, David Findlay, 1956, no. 34 (ill.) – Amsterdam, Van Wisselingh, 1960, no. 45; and 1962, no. 50 (ill.).

**Description:** Two women in front of a grey wall flecked with decorative motifs. One is standing stiff as a puppet in a check dress, her face rendered in green in pink; the other, in beige with a white apron, is seated, her face rendered in a flat tone. Above them are the green, glass partitionings of a studio wall, their frames edged with brightly coloured mouldings. (AC)

#### IV-20 Madame Vuillard Cutting Bread

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, on cradled panel, 33 × 25.5 cm  
Signed, lower left: *ev*  
Private collection



IV-20

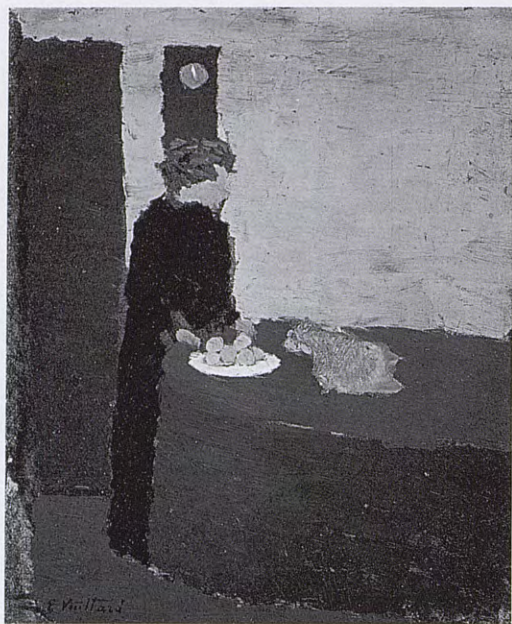
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Billy Wilder, Los Angeles (California) – Wilder sale, Christie's, New York, 13 Nov. 1989, lot 4 (col. ill.) – Waddington Galleries, London – Galerie Daniel Malingue, Paris – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101 – Santa Barbara, University Art Museum, 1966, no. 68 (ill.) – Paris, Malingue, 1990, no. 7 (col. ill.) – Montreal, 1998, no. 171, p. 48 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** *House & Garden*, April 1989, p. 154 (col. ill.).

**Description:** Seen in profile, in a dress the colour of dark homespun cloth, Madame Vuillard is cutting a light yellow loaf on a rectangular table. The light-coloured partition in the background frames a black panel. (AC)





IV-21

#### IV-21 The Cat on the Table

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 26.8 × 21.9 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection, 1970.17.93F

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Georges Seligmann, New York – Edward Molyneux, Paris – Mrs Ailsa Mellon Bruce, New York, 1955 – Mellon Bruce gift to the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1970.

**Exhibitions:** Palm Beach, Society of the Four Arts, 1958, no. 46 – San Francisco, Legion of Honor, 1961, no. 70 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1966, no. 172 (ill.); and 1978, pp. 98, 99 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1975, p. 372, no. 2465 (ill.).

**Description:** A female figure dressed in black, her silhouette curiously extended by a wall clock. She is reaching for a dish of eggs set on a table-cover that hangs all the way down to the floor, and on which the cat is clearly visible. (JS)



IV-22

#### IV-22 The Cook

c. 1892-93  
Oil on canvas, 27 × 22 cm  
Signed, lower left: *ev*  
Private collection, New York

**Provenance:** Jack Aghion, Paris, c. 1899 – Aghion sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 29 March 1918, lot 28 [*La Cuisinière*] (ill.) – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 21167), 1,010 F – Druet, Paris, 20 June 1923, part of a lot for 450,000 F – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 19 June 1934, lot 82 (ill.) – M. Rousseau, France, 2,950 F – Paul Rosenberg, New York – Private collection, New York.

**Description:** Dressed in a black blouse and brown skirt protected by a blue apron, the cook stands in front of a stove partly covered by earthenware tiles on which some saucepans and an enamel stockpot are standing. (JS)



IV-23

#### IV-23 The Cook with a Candle

c. 1892  
Oil on canvas, 27 × 21 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Girard, Paris – Sale, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 30 May 1949, lot 37 – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 29 March 1957, lot 72 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 23 Nov. 1977, lot 125 (ill.), bought in – Sam Salz, New York – Robert Dubois, La Varenne (France) c. 1978 – Jean-Claude Bellier, Paris, 1983 – Alain Tarica, New York, 1984 – Aaron Fleischman, Washington D.C. – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 17-18 Nov. 1998, lot 269 (col. ill.), bought in.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 8 – Stockholm, Galerie d'Art Latin, 1948, no. 2 – Houston-Washington D.C., 1989-90, no. 43 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, p. 65 – Forgione 1992, pp. 143-144, fig. 73.

**Description:** The cook is bent over a stove on which a candle has been placed, dividing the room somewhat uncannily into a light-green area and a shadowy brown one. The hood of the stove is silhouetted in brown against an ochre-coloured door, seen frontally. (AC)

#### IV-24 Two Women in the Kitchen

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 32.5 × 22 cm  
Signed, upper right: *ev*  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Girard, Paris – Carroll Carstairs, New York – Sam Salz, New York – William B. Jaffe, New York, c. 1954 – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101 [*Breakfast*].

**Description:** The woman bending over a stove on the left is wearing a deep-brown blouse and a greenish-white apron and holding a straw-coloured earthenware casserole dish in her hands. Above her is the hood of the stove, on the edge of which stands a bottle. Her companion is wearing a dress of the same colour and an open bolero that reveals a shirt-front of a slightly duller tone than the first woman's apron. Brown background with an upper window marked in light vertical strips. Heavy impasto throughout. (JS)

In this small-scale painting, the artist inclines towards the manner of a Dutch-style monochrome; the composition could almost be one of Félix Vallotton's future woodcuts. The contrast between the two women is made very clear throughout. Notice the touching movement of Marie wearily twisting her torso within the painting's exiguous frame – an eloquent expression of her longing to be elsewhere. Madame Vuillard, on the other hand, attends stolidly to her household chores. As always, the older woman has her eye fixed on the hearth, whilst the younger one gazes into the distance. In a thoroughly admirable detail, the light from the partitioned window falls on the wall behind the chimney, creating a kind of heraldic field there, and gleaming dully like a set of rich *cloisonné* ware. Vuillard uses almost the same framing in this composition as in *The Cook with Candle*, but does not reproduce the earlier painting's dark, gothic atmosphere. Instead, he places himself at the centre of the image, adjusting the perspective lines (in particular the window bars) to create an Expressionist-like space of the kind found in *Interior, the Artist's Mother and Sister* (IV-112).



IV-24





IV-25

## IV-25

### Woman in Black Standing in Front of a Beige Background

1892

Oil on cardboard, 31 × 16 cm

Signed and dated, lower right: *ev 92*

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Sam Salz, New York – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 56 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 16.

**Bibliography:** *Arts et métiers graphiques*, no. 54, 15 August 1936, p. 17 (ill.) – Chastel 1946, ill. on cover – Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 49; and 1968, pp. 16–17.

In a scarcely adumbrated interior, this retiring female figure expresses surprise; she stands on the tips of her toes, which are hidden by the hem of her dress. 'A palette more often than not comprising blacks, browns, ochres and whites, is all the artist needs; yet despite so much abstraction and self-imposed austerity, his silhouettes, for all their perfunctoriness, still seem alive and [indeed] look as if they were moving.'<sup>1</sup> Vuillard's slender, quiet, forever timidly reserved young women – often, around 1892–93, his sister – are associated with his then conservative views on women.

<sup>1</sup> Claude Roger-Marx, 1946a, p. 49.

## IV-26

### Madame Vuillard's Dressmaking Studio

1892

Oil on canvas, 24 × 34 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Stephen C. Clark, New York, c. 1954 – Jane Forbes Clark, New York – Private collection, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 38 (ill.), 101 – New Haven, Yale, 1960, no. 63 (ill.) – New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, summer 1960, no. 129 – University Park, The Pennsylvania State University, 1968, no. 6 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989–90, no. 64 (col. ill.).



IV-26

**Bibliography:** Daniel 1984, pp. 142, 146, fig. 56 – Easton 1989, pp. 85, 88, 89 – Forgione 1992, pp. 72, 97, 98, 118, 146, fig. 55 – Sidlauskas 1997, p. 96.

This is one of Vuillard's more obvious confrontations between mother and daughter. The women placed on either side of the window recall the tried-and-tested models of the Italian Renaissance, especially the *Annunciations* or *Visitations* that place the Virgin and the angel against the perfect curve of an arch, as in Ghirlandajo's *Visitation*<sup>1</sup> (Louvre) or Fra Angelico's *Annunciation*<sup>2</sup> at the convent of San Marco in Florence. Clearly in the mainstream of the Nabi tradition, this picture foreshadows by a couple of years Maurice Denis' masterpiece, *The Visitation* (see ill.), in which the Virgin Mary and Saint Elizabeth are divided by the narrow arch of a trellis, while their hieratic forms on either side of the intervening space echo and emphasise the architecture behind them.



Maurice Denis, *The Visitation*, 1894, oil on canvas, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

Vuillard's window, with its geometric lattice-work, precludes the possibility of flight into the outside world. It confines the composition to the family drama, and, as a result, the two female figures emblazon their presence on the picture space with peculiar force. The atmosphere is a great deal more taut, more palpably charged than in Maurice Denis' painting, and the delicate jumble on the work-table

in no way dissipates this tension. Marie, in the same pose as in *Woman in Black Standing in Front of a Beige Background* (IV-25), shrinks into the grey wall, a faceless figure, whilst Madame Vuillard stands out boldly against the pink background, stiffened, as it were, by the stripes of her smock. Vuillard around this time is clearly intent on foisting on his mother some of the traits of the formidable and despot mother-figures found in the theatre of the day; Madame Alving in Ibsen's *Ghosts* comes to mind, as does the fearful Kostelnitka in Aleksandr Ostrovsky's *The Storm* (1860), one of the most memorable models in the repertory of André Antoine and Aurélien Lugné-Poe.

<sup>1</sup> Domenico di Tommaso Bigordi, called Ghirlandajo, *The Visitation*, 1491, tempera, 172 × 165 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Guido di Pietro, called Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation* (cell 3), 1438–1440, 190 × 164 cm, San Marco, Florence.



# IV-27

## The Conversation

c. 1891-92

Oil on canvas, 23.8 × 33.4 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

National Gallery of Art, Washington

D.C., Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection,

1970.17.92

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Edward Molyneux, Paris, 1947 – Ailsa Mellon Bruce, New York, 1955 – Mellon Bruce bequest to the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1970.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 9 – Washington D.C.-New York, 1952 – Palm Beach, Society of the Four Arts, 1958, no. 45 – San Francisco, Legion of Honor, 1961, no. 71 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1966, no. 174, (ill.); and 1975, pp. 372, (no. 2464), 373 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art,

1978, pp. 96, 97 (ill.) – Brooklyn, 1990, p. 88, no. 62 (ill.) – Florence, 1998, no. 57, p. 96 (ill.), and Montreal, 1998, no. 169, p. 47 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1948, pp. 4, 5, col. pl. II – Georges 1982, p. 51 – Daniel 1984, p. 142, fig. 55 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 208-210, fig. 90 – Cogeval 1993b, col. ill. on back cover – Cogeval, exhib. cat. 1998, Florence, p. 188, and Montreal, p. 118.

In the family apartment a screen, sometimes a mere curtain, separated the dressmaking studio and Madame Vuillard's seamstresses – one of whom we can make out on the far left in a chequered smock – from the family's private quarters, in which this *Conversation* clearly takes place. In the right foreground, Madame Vuillard has interrupted her reading of a letter to have a word with her daughter, Marie, who stands on the opposite side of the table. Thin, exaggeratedly pale, sheathed in a black dress, her hands



Edvard Munch, *Sketch for Hedda Gabler*, 1907, watercolour and graphite. Munch Museet, Oslo.

clutching a chair, the painter's sister foreshadows the Expressionist figures of Edvard Munch, such as the Ibsenesque Hedda Gabler (see ill.). The tension between the two women is almost palpable; indeed, what we



IV-27



IV-28



IV-29

have here appears more of a dressing-down than a conversation as such. While André Chastel viewed the composition as 'the plastic development of an almost comic theme',<sup>1</sup> today we tend to be more struck by the latent drama exhibited by this very unusual image. To be sure, Madame Vuillard and her daughter will ordinarily have got along with each other, but there must have been times when the thirty-year-old daughter, still unmarried, was the butt of some rather barbed remarks from her relatives. But in the early days when he was close to Lugné-Poe (who introduced him to the work of Ibsen and Maeterlinck), the artist was wont to fabricate 'passing crises in an otherwise harmonious relationship... in order to create a dramatic effect, a kind of Symbolist psychodrama.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chastel, unpublished notes, Salomon archives.

<sup>2</sup> Ciaffa, 1985, p. 210.

# IV-28

## Woman in a Blue Peignoir

c. 1892

Pastel and charcoal on beige-tinted paper, 25 × 26 cm

Stamp 4, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 97.

**Description:** *The silhouette is shown in profile in front of a light-coloured cupboard on the left. (AC)*

# IV-29

## The Mending

c. 1892

Oil on canvas, 24 × 32 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York – Prentis Hale, United States – Private collection.

**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, pp. 186-187, fig. 74.

**Description:** *On the far right, a woman in a grey and black striped housecoat is crouching down, mending the garment of a man partly concealed by her head and body. In the left foreground stand an ochre table and a chair in the same tint. A reddish-brown vertical band runs down the middle of the white wall. (JS)*





IV-30

#### IV-30 The Plait

c. 1892  
Oil on wood, 27.3 × 23 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hector Brame, Paris, 1953 – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London, 1954 – R. Shaw-Kennedy, Esq., London, 1954 – Richard Nathanson, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 4 Dec. 1980, lot 522 (col. ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 19 Nov. 1986, lot 108 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** London, Tooth & Sons, 1954, no. 1; and April-May 1969, no. 23 (ill.) [*La Nièce de l'artiste*, c. 1916].

**Description:** A half-length view of a young woman in a grey striped peignoir with a black collar, seen from the back. She has a thick head of reddish hair from which a long plait hangs down. Some pink and white clothes rest on a chair at top right. Beige wall-paper with patches of pink. Ochre-toned surface at the bottom and on the right. (AC)



IV-31

#### IV-31 Two Women Sewing

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 33 × 27.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Lefevre, London, 1964 – Ian Hollick, Great Britain – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 25 June 1986, lot 115 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A quick sketch depicting a grey silhouette next to a woman in a striped housecoat. (AC)

#### IV-32 The Ear

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 12 × 15.5 cm  
Stamp 4, lower left  
Private collection, Great Britain



IV-32

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London – Thomas and Anthea Gibson collection, London.

**Description:** A woman in black bent over a dark red table-cover in the glare of a lamp ruthlessly highlighting certain details of her face (especially the ear, which looks disproportionately large against the warm reflections of her locks). (AC)

#### IV-33 The Blue Skirt

c. 1892  
Oil on hardboard, 31.5 × 23 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Jacques Dubourg, Paris, c. 1943 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A woman in a blue skirt and white blouse, seen from behind, bending over a brown table with a yellow top. Mauve background with several darker smudges and a hint of red on the left. A rough sketch. (AC)



IV-33

#### IV-34 Grand-Mère Michaud and Her Grand-Daughter

c. 1892  
Oil on canvas, 20 × 21.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York – Prentis Hale, United States – Private collection.

**Description:** To the left, an old lady with a hat and shawl, to the right, a young woman with a pot in her hands. Orange background. (AC)



IV-34

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 13 Nov. 1997, lot 312 (col. ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A woman standing with her back to us in a speckled green dress. Bright yellow background. (JS)

#### IV-35 Woman Pinning up Her Hair, Seen from the Back

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 20 × 10.5 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown



IV-35





IV-36

## IV-36 The Fitting

1893  
Oil on wood, 23.8 × 18.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Reims (France),  
D. 977.7

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris – Acquired by the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Reims, 1977.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 55 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 24 [*L'Es-sayage*] – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 8bis [*Artiste dans sa loge*] – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951 (not in cat.), col. ill. on cover – London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 111 [*L'Actrice s'habillant*] – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 192 – Paris, Galerie Beaux-Arts, 1955, no. 133 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 10 [*La Prova*] – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 7 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 4 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 5 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 15 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 26, [*Actrice dans sa loge*] (ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 15, p. 88 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Mercanton 1949, col. pl. 1 – Ray-nal 1949, p. 95 (col. ill.) – *Lettres françaises*, 1 June 1961, p. 12 (ill.) – 'Les principales acquisitions des Musées de province', *Revue du Louvre*, nos. 5-6, 1977, p. 370 – *GBA* 91, March 1978, p. 13 (ill.), no. 67 – Taburet 1980, pp. 374-375, fig. 1 – Georges 1982, p. 64 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 33 (ill.) – Cogeval, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, pp. 124 (col. ill.), 126 and 1993b, p. 32 (col. ill.).

**Description:** Standing out sharply against a red screen, a young woman in a white peignoir is seen in profile, her arms raised, apparently buttoning up the back of her dress. Behind her, another woman in an ochre-coloured dress is putting away pieces of material. (JS)

Inexplicably, during the 1950s this painting became known as *The Actress Changing in Her Dressing Room*. Yet the young woman's surroundings – the wallpaper, the screen – clearly links this picture to the Vuillard family apartment, and in particular to Marie's room, which Vuillard would again depict in *Interior with a Red Bed* (IV-133). Logically, this small painting should be seen in conjunction with the series of pictures relating to Marie's wedding, which would, of course, alter its dating from 1892 to 1893 and make it an 'arraying' of the bride. The elliptical nature of the composition, however, cautions us against drawing too hasty a conclusion.

## IV-37 Woman Arranging Her Hair

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 34 × 26 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** At top left is a bundle of green and blue linen heaped on a bed. In the foreground, a woman in a mauve-grey dress is sitting in a purple-backed chair pinning up her hair, from which a lock hangs down. Red highlights on the edge of the bed and on the figure's neck, and a small, pale-coloured shelf on the left. The wall in the background is grey flecked with brown, shading into orange flecked with red on the left. (AC)

## IV-38 The Vigil

c. 1892  
Oil on canvas, 37 × 46 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Marlborough, London – Emil Georg Bührle, Zurich (Switzerland), 1954 – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibitions:** London, Marlborough, 1953, no. 30 (ill.) – Berlin, Nationalgalerie, 1958, no. 64 – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1958, no. 267 – Munich,

Haus der Kunst, 1958-59, no. 173 – Lucerne, Kunstmuseum, 1963, no. 52 – Zurich, 1964, no. 149 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 24 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 99 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Schweicher 1955, pl. 13, col. pl. 16.

**Description:** The foreground is largely taken up by the bed, its red-striped blanket flecked with green standing out sharply against the white canvas ground. Further back, facing the viewer, is a seated woman in a dark-blue apron, the bib of which is trimmed and dotted with pink. A vermilion mass to the left and a white one on the right, against an ochre-coloured wall flecked with brown. (JS)

Vuillard is especially fond of scenes in which a person lying in bed is watched over by a relative. Perhaps this composition depicts Madame Vuillard keeping vigil over Marie, who contracted mumps in 1892 (as seen in *Mumps*, IV-52). Yet the seated woman does not quite have the corpulence of Madame Vuillard, and the sex of the person lying ill in bed is not really clear.

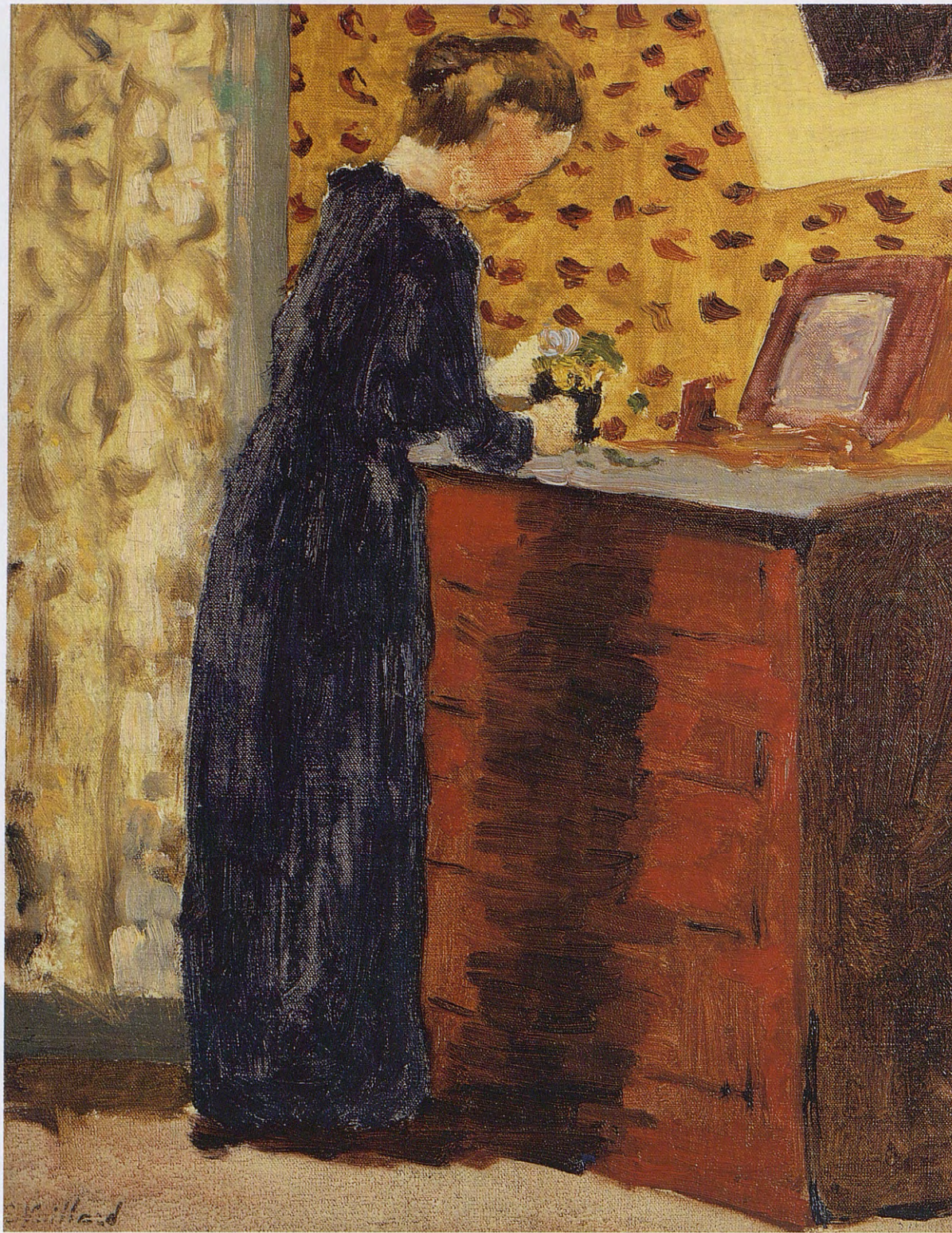


IV-37



IV-38





IV-39

#### IV-39 The Red Chest of Drawers

c. 1892  
Oil on canvas, 34 × 26.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Joerin, Basle (Switzerland) – Philippe Batsalle, Paris – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 31 [*Femme à la commode*].

**Description:** A woman in an ultramarine dress arranging flowers in a vase placed on a vermillion chest of drawers. Yellow floral background. (AC)

The mirror leaning against the wall and the white top of the chest of drawers – possibly an adumbration of a marble top – suggest that it is actually a *commode de toilette* in a corner of the apartment, at a time when lower-middle-class homes did not necessarily have a bathroom.



IV-40

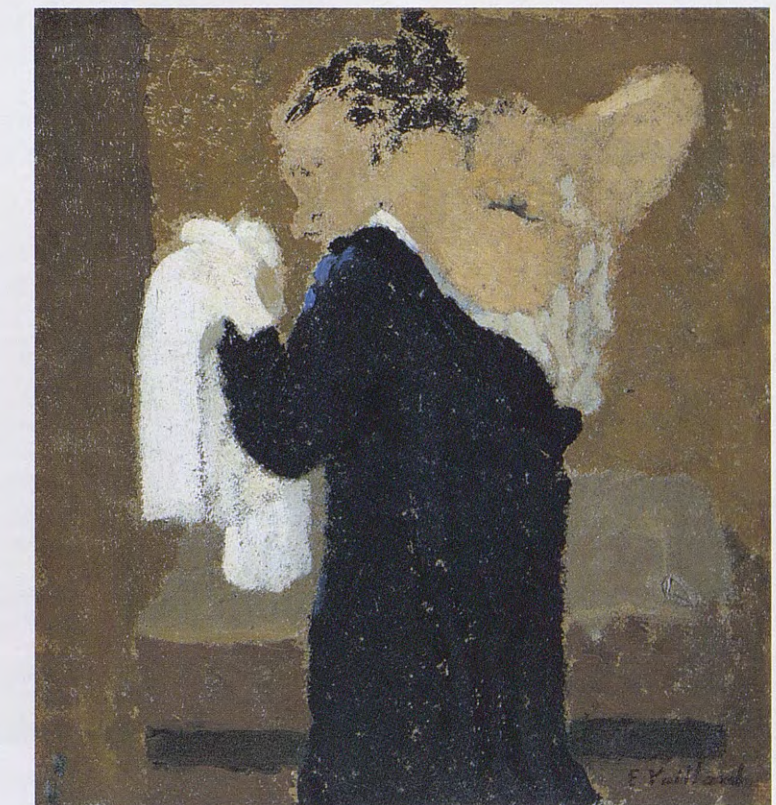
#### IV-40 Woman Standing at Her Dressing-Table

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 29 × 20 cm  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** M. Schultz, Paris – Gilbert Halbers, Paris, c. 1961 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948 (not in cat.) – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 50.

**Description:** A woman in a grey dress and light-coloured blouse with pink stripes stands before a plum-coloured table in a pale grey-green room. (JS)



IV-41

#### IV-41 Madame Vuillard Washing

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 22.5 × 20.9 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection, 1970.17.91

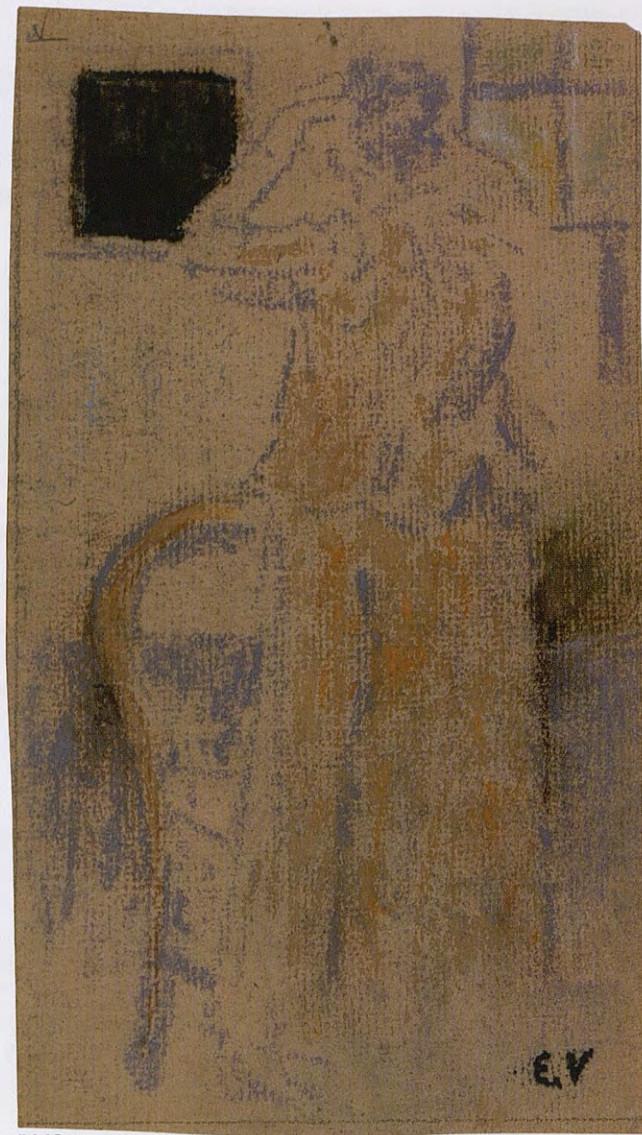
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Pétridès, Paris, c. 1947 – Edward Molyneux, Paris, c. 1952 – Mrs Ailsa Mellon Bruce, New York, 1955 – Mellon Bruce bequest to the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1970.

**Exhibitions:** Washington D.C.-New York, 1952 – Palm Beach, Society of the Four Arts, 1958, no. 44 – San Francisco, Legion of Honor, 1961, no. 73 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1966, no. 173 (ill.), and National Gallery of Art, 1978, pp. 94, 95 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1975, p. 372, no. 2463 (ill.) – Daniel 1984, p. 74, fig. 18.

**Description:** Madame Vuillard's ochre-coloured shoulder emerges from her black dress edged with touches of blue and grey. A white towel in hand, she washes herself with a sponge. Ochre-brown interior. (JS)





IV-42

**IV-42**  
**Back View of a Woman**  
**Pinning up Her Hair**

c. 1891-92  
Pastel on paper, 19.7 × 11.2 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection, United States.



IV-43

**IV-43**  
**Marie in a Camisole at Her**  
**Dressing-Table**

c. 1891-92  
Pastel on paper, 35.2 × 24.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Kunsthändler Sabine Helms, Munich (Germany) – Private collection, Germany – Sale, Christie's, London, 28 Nov. 1989, lot 117 (col. ill.), – Galerie Robert Schmit, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Bremen, Werner, 1977, no. 92 (col. ill.) – Bremen, Werner, 1983, no. 9 (ill.) – Paris, Schmit, 1990, no. 73 (col. ill.) – Paris, Schmit, 1991 (not in cat.).

**Bibliography:** Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, pp. 324-325, fig. 155.1.

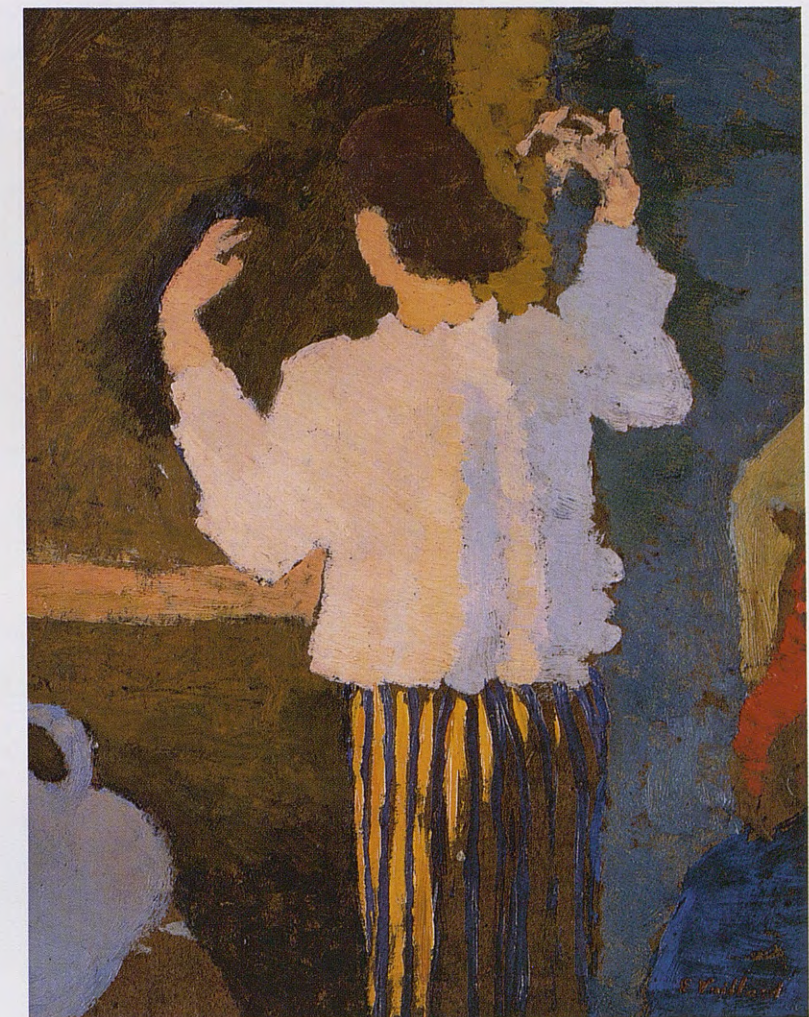
**IV-44**  
**Marie in a Camisole at Her**  
**Dressing-Table**

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 34.3 × 26.7 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Henry B. Hyde, United States – Donald and Jean Stralem Collection, New York – Stralem sale, Sotheby's, New York, 8 May 1995, lot 43 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Christie's, 1968, no. 33 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 74 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 155 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, p. 98 – Sidlauskas 1997, p. 103 (ill.).



IV-44



IV-45

**IV-45**  
**The Apprentice Dressmaker**

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 21 × 19 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, New York

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – André Weil, Paris – Knoedler, London – Stanley Snellenburg, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) – Private collection, New York.

**Description:** A young woman in a turquoise blouse is measuring a piece of yellow material. Her face and hands are a uniform yellow throughout. The wall in the background is brown. (AC)





IV-46

#### IV-46 The Blue Seamstress

1892  
Oil on wood, 21 × 29.5 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right: *ev 92*  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 21455), 11 March 1919 – Alex Reid, Glasgow (Great Britain), 7 Jan. 1920 – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, 1892, no. 183 – Glasgow, McLellan, 1920, no. 130.



IV-47

#### IV-47 The Sewing-Machine

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 40 × 56 cm  
Private collection, New York

**Provenance:** Ambroise Vollard, Paris – Jean Metthey, Paris – Private collection, New York, 1951.

**Description:** Two figures seated to the left of a round table upon which a large wine-bottle and a carafe are set. To the right is a sewing-machine with a Veronese-green box on it. The cardboard support shows through in places. (JS)



IV-48

#### IV-48 Interior with Marie Bent over Her Sewing

c. 1892-93  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 23.2 × 34.3 cm  
Signed, lower left: *ev*  
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven (Connecticut), 1966.79.16

**Provenance:** Georges Bernheim, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 24171) – Georges Bénard, Paris – De Hauke, New York, 1930 – Jacques Seligmann, New York – Edith Malvina K. Wetmore, United States – Wetmore bequest to Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, 1966.

**Exhibitions:** New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1930, no. 98 – New York, Seligmann, 1930, no. 21 [*La Table mise. La soupe*, 1895] – New York, 1948, no. 8 (ill.) [*La Soupe*, c. 1895] – University Park, The Pennsylvania State University, 1968,

no. 22 (ill.) – New Haven, Yale, 1980, no. 1 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 15 (col. ill).

**Bibliography:** *GBA* 69, supplement, no. 1176, Feb. 1967, no. 372 – Yale University Art Gallery 1972, no. 85 – Easton 1989, p. 33 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 57 (col. ill.).

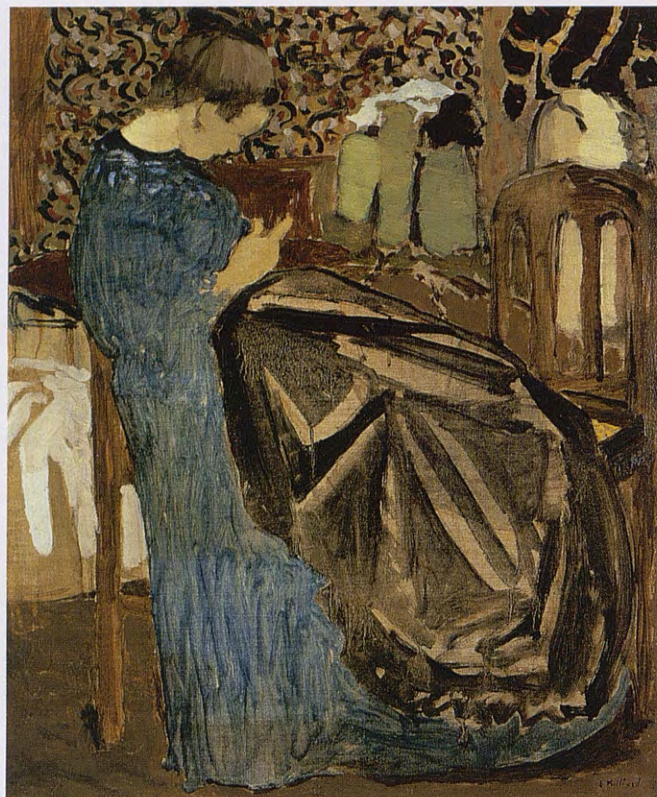
**Description:** A seated female figure bent over the work she has draped over a table. To the right is a pedestal table, and, in the background, a secretaire. (JS)

This is one of Vuillard's first large paintings to present objects possessed of a fluid, shifting texture. The red-and-blue floral-pattern wallpaper, the curtain parted to let in the soft pink light, the tangle of fabrics spread out on the table: all form irrepressible waves, or, as George Mauner puts it, 'the spilling over of patterns from wall to table'.<sup>1</sup> Only the figure bent over her work – Marie, in all likelihood – establishes some kind of equilibrium within the composition, which

is a virtuoso demonstration of the artist's skill at rendering dizzying floral patterns, rough grey fabrics, pink daylight filtering through a window, dotted and stippled fabrics or the blue of a dress beneath which the cardboard support shows through.

<sup>1</sup> George Mauner, exhib. cat., University Park, Pennsylvania, 1968, no. 22.





IV-49

#### IV-49 Seamstress with Large Piece of Cloth

c. 1892  
Oil on canvas, 64.5 × 53.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
The Saint Louis Art Museum,  
Saint Louis (Missouri), 78:1975

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hector Brame, Paris, 1950 – Knoedler, New York – Sydney M. Shoenberg, Sr., Saint Louis, 1953 – The Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis, gift of Sydney M. Shoenberg, Sr., 1975.

**Exhibition:** Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 17 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Rathbone 1954, p. 285 – Cowart 1976, pp. 21-23 (ill.) – Easton 1989, p. 33 – Groom 1993, p. 215, no. 42.

**Description:** A girl in a blue housecoat stitching a broadly sketched length of black material folded over her knees. The wall is dappled white, black, red and green. A tailor's dummy and the back of a chair on the right. A quick sketch. (AC)



IV-50

#### IV-50 Young Woman Sewing

1892  
Oil on cardboard, 19 × 15 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Dedication on rear: *cher Mogens, je vous communique ce petit échantillon de mon travail en réponse à votre aimable attention en attendant que je puisse vous dire de vive voix combien j'ai été touché, ce qui peut être bientôt. Vuillard*<sup>1</sup>

Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Gift from the artist to Mögens Ballin, 1893 – M. Rohde, Copenhagen – Théodor Wolfer, Denmark – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Stockholm, Liljevalchs Konsthall, 1954, no. 396a – Paris, Berès, May 1957, no. 68; and 1990, no. 100 (ill.).

Vuillard probably presented Mögens Ballin with this small sample of his work to thank his Danish friend, a Nabi disciple, for having organised an exhibition of their group at the Kleis gallery in Copenhagen in 1893. Ballin had even succeeded in selling one of the artist's two paintings in the show: 'I hope you aren't upset that I did not acknowledge

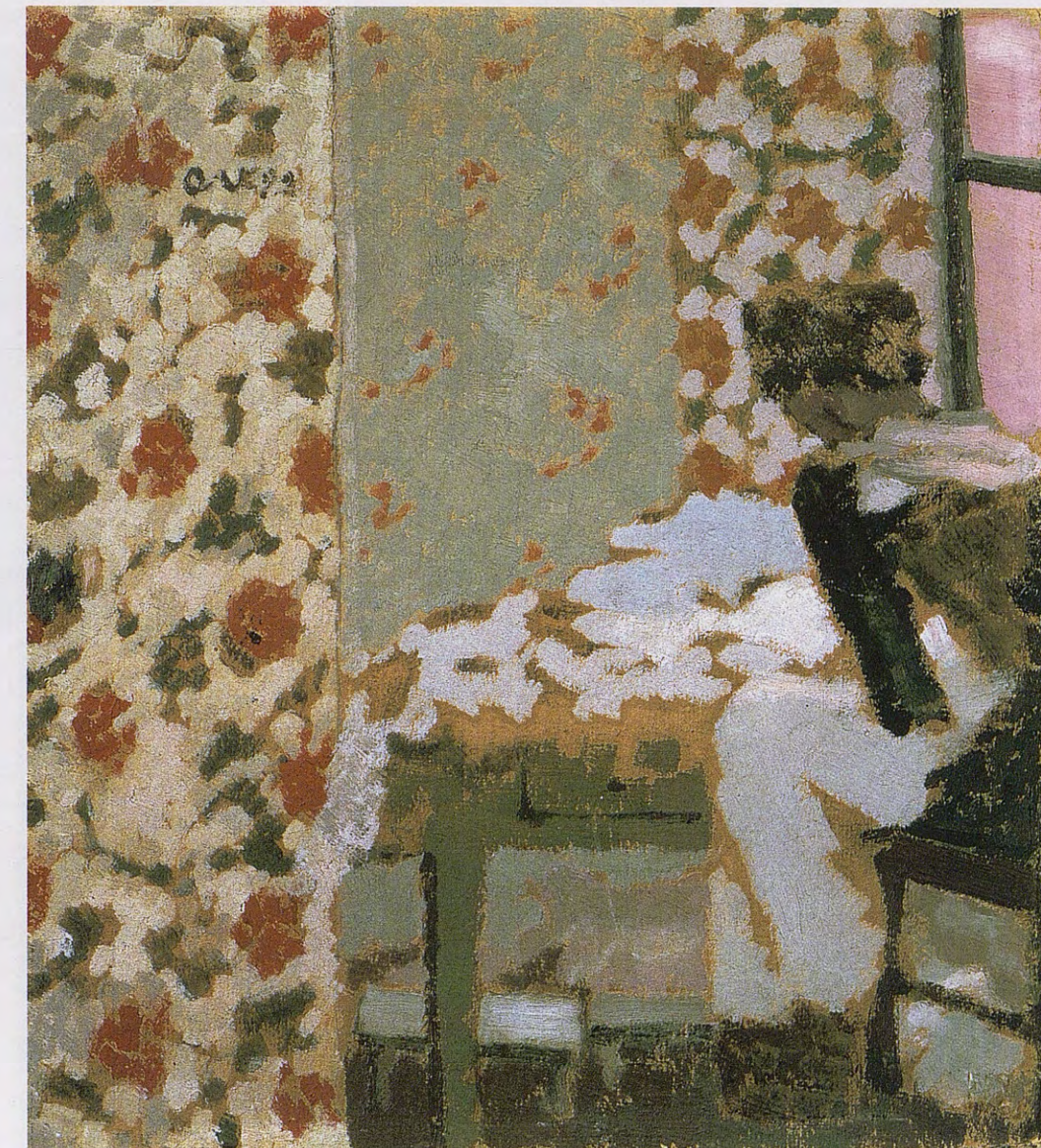
receiving the canvases. Oh, I had so much, so very much to do and, besides, they only arrived a few days ago – tell everyone they arrived in good condition and that at all events all the young people like them very much. They've been hanging since yesterday in what is otherwise a rather mediocre exhibition; the dealer has bought your woman sewing and Sérusier's landscape.'<sup>2</sup> Around the same time, Ballin also sent Vuillard a photograph of himself and his wife, inscribed on the back (see ill.).

<sup>1</sup> 'Dear Mogens, I am sending you this little sample of my work in reply to your thoughtful note and in expectation of my being able to tell you in person how greatly I was touched by it; I hope this will be soon. Vuillard.'

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Mögens Ballin to E. V., 27 March 1893, Salomon archives.



Mögens Ballin and his wife, anonymous photograph. Private collection.



IV-51

#### IV-51 Woman Darning

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 27.9 × 25.4 cm  
Signed and dated, upper left: *ev 92*  
Indianapolis Museum of Art,  
Indianapolis (Indiana), Inv. no. 69.68

**Provenance:** Ernest Coquelin Cadet, Paris – Coquelin Cadet sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 26 May 1909, lot 56 [*La Couturière*] – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 17402), 405 F – Alex Reid, Glasgow (Great Britain), 23 Feb. 1920 – Lefevre, London – J. M. Sieff, Esq., London, 18 Nov. 1932 – Lefevre, London – Georges Keller, New York, 1947 – Bignou, New York – Mrs James W. Fesler, Indianapolis (Indiana); bequeathed to Miss Blanche Stillson, Indianapolis, 1960 – Stillson gift to the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis (Indiana), in memory of Caroline Marmon Fesler, 1969.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, 1892, no. 184 [*Ravaudeuse*] – Glasgow, McLellan, 1920, no. 122 – London, Lefevre, 1945, no. 46; and 1946, no. 56 – Indianapolis, Museum of Art, 1972, p. 50 (ill.); and 1976 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 31 (col. ill.) [*The Seamstress*].

**Bibliography:** Schweicher 1955, pl. 5 – *GBA* 77, no. 1225, Feb. 1971, p. 105 (ill.) – Easton 1989, p. 47 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 54, (col. ill.).

**Description:** A woman in a white apron, seated by a window, is busy sewing. Her work lies on the table in front of her. (JS)

Vuillard here again expresses a complicated matter with minimal means: the table is left unfinished; the pieces of material are barely sketched out in white and grey and pale pink; the seamstress is delineated in a mere handful of strokes; yet the spatial effect is rich in visual illusions. The patterned wallpaper in

the foreground left is probably a door concealed in a wall, the same one that Marie opens in *Mumps* (see IV-52). Indeed, we are in the same room, but the painter has chosen a vantage point somewhat to the right. The depth of field is left unclear; nevertheless, the three bands of wallpaper appear to be connected, as if they formed a continuous screen. The delicate harmony of the prevailing Tyrian pinks and mauves springs from the otherworldly light filtering through the window. This is probably one of the compositions sold through the good offices of Lugné-Poe to Coquelin Cadet, which 'hung for a while in the dressing rooms of the illustrious members' whom the director was hoping to sell works to'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lugné-Poe 1930, p. 193.





IV-52

## IV-52 Mumps

c. 1892-93  
Oil on cardboard, 24 x 20 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection

Provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.

Exhibitions: Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 17 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 31 (ill.) – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 35 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 28 (ill.) – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 14 – Nancy, Beaux-Arts, 1963, no. 137 (ill.) – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 20 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 26 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 42 (ill.).

Bibliography: Schweicher 1949, pp. 32-33, 93, 103 – *Time*, 23 August 1968, p. 57 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 77.

Description: Shown in three-quarters profile from behind, with a strip of material wound around her head, a young woman steps towards a table illuminated on the right by a trellis-covered window. A floral screen dappled with red on the left. The rhythm is lively and the sober tones particularly well-chosen. (AC)

An ailing figure delineated with a certain irony, Marie wanders from room to room, a head-band covering her ears. Two parallel bands frame the picture space, the one on the left with a variegated pattern, the other with broad geometrical motifs. The young woman's slightly canted figure and the position of her hand indicate that she is opening a door, no

doubt the type of unobtrusive panel that is papered over to match the wall, as in *The Suit-or* (IV-132). This decorative device allows the artist to enliven a motif as it catches the light: shown in profile, as it were, the wallpaper appears to spring into relief.

An unpublished drawing (see ill.) shows Marie in bed, with the same band around her head.



E. V., *Marie in Her Sick Bed*, graphite on paper, 24.1 x 31.5 cm. Private collection.



IV-53

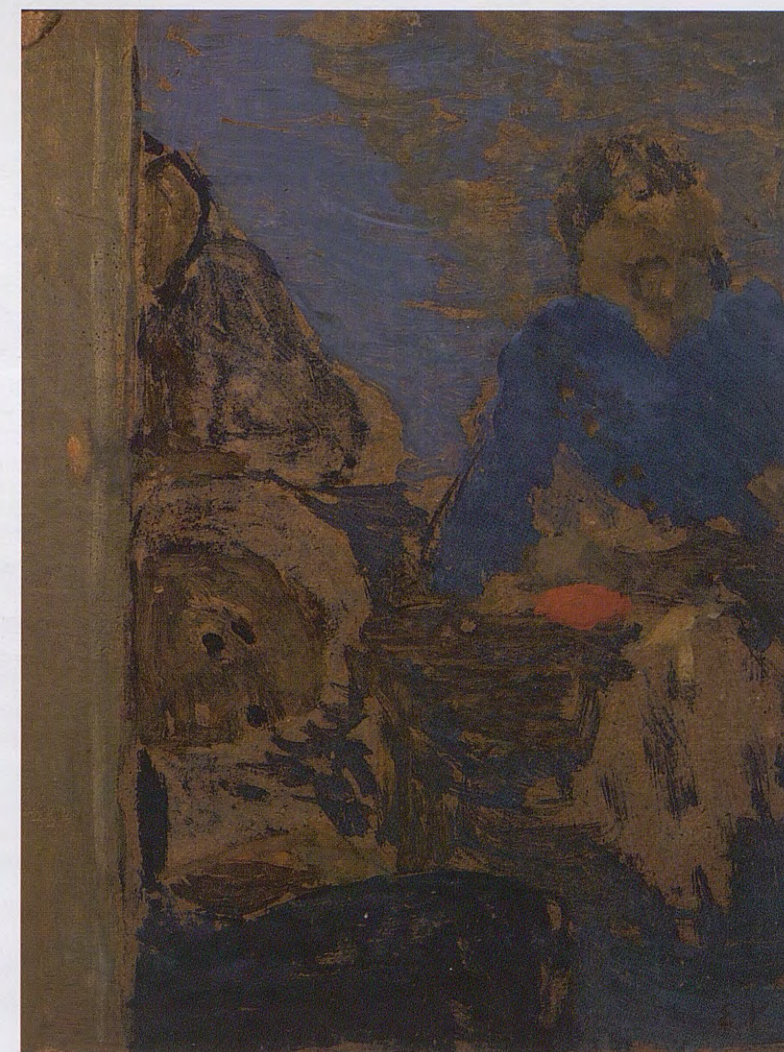
## IV-53 Women Inspecting Some Sewing

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 27.3 x 38.1 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

Provenance: Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – O'Hana, London, c. 1957 – Mayor, London – Eric Estorick, London – Kirk Douglas, Beverly Hills – Douglas sale, Christie's, New York, 16 May 1990, lot 306 (col. ill.), bought in – Private collection, United States.

Exhibition: London, O'Hana, 1957, no. 54.

Description: There are perhaps two figures here, though shown somewhat indistinctly, in profile before a table on the right; green patches on a sofa on the left. A square flecked with red and a second, black square in the background. Light grey wall. The composition seems unfinished. (JS)



IV-54

## IV-54 Women in Blue around a Table

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 22 x 17 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Private collection, France

Provenance: Artist's studio – Hanover, London – Sale, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 18 June 1957, lot 233 – William Kennedy, New York, 1960 – Washburn, New York, 1987 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 Dec. 1987, lot 113 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 21 March 1988, lot 86 (col. ill.) – Jean-Claude Dupuis, Paris – Private collection, France.

Description: A rough sketch; a dash of bright red in the middle of the composition. (AC)





IV-55

#### IV-55 The Drawer

c. 1892  
Oil on canvas, 48 x 36 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection – Wildenstein, New York – Private collection – Sale, Christie's, London, 9 Dec. 1997, lot 2 (col. ill.) – Vicente Madrigal collection, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 3 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 39 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 43 (ill.) – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1973, no. 4 – France, travelling exhib., 1973-74, pp. 6, 16, pl. 17 – Brussels, Musées Royaux, 1975, no. 27 (col. ill.).

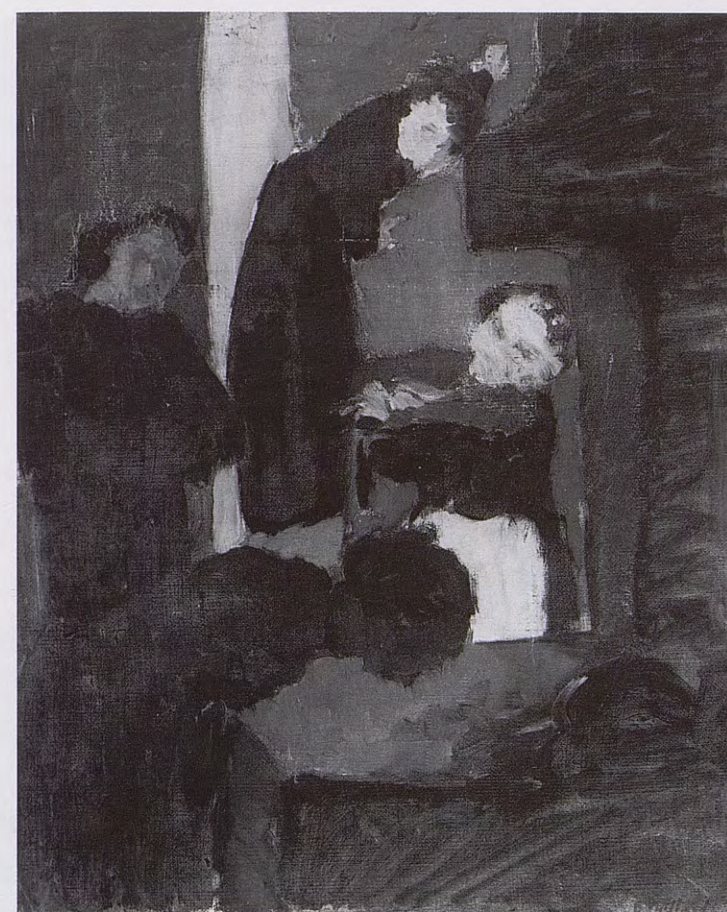
**Bibliography:** Salomon 1961, pp. 36, 37 (col. ill., *Ouvrières au chiffonnier*, c. 1890); and 1968, pp. 54, 55 (col. ill.) – Perucchi-Petri 1976, p. 122, fig. 77 – Georges 1982, pp. 50, 77 – Groom 1993, p. 30, fig. 42.

**Description:** A young woman in brown steadies herself on the edge of a drawer of the large chiffonier in which she is rummaging. A grey highlight runs down her back, reflecting the lighting from the room in the background where a woman dressed in reddish-brown can be made out, standing close to a table upon which brightly illuminated pieces of material lie scattered. A large panel with dabs of black, vermilion and white on the left, with a fair-haired apprentice taking a step forward, clad in grey. (AC)

The subject recalls that of *The Apprentices* (IV-9) but is treated in a more complex manner. Jacques Salomon formerly linked this paint-

ing with Vuillard's early experiments with *japonisme*, and Ursula Perucchi-Petri has since then identified the particular Japanese models that inspired the artist. 'Vuillard has chosen a pose full of grace and movement: the young girl is standing perched on one foot to reach the upper drawer of the chiffonier, with her other leg thrust out behind her. Floating loosely around her feet, the hem of her dress stands out vividly against the light tone of the floor, like a flat ornament with arabesque curves. This position is strongly reminiscent of a pose Harunobu often employed to accentuate the fragility and grace of his female silhouettes.'

Note the delightful detail of the blue ribbon rippling down the girl's back. With this



IV-56

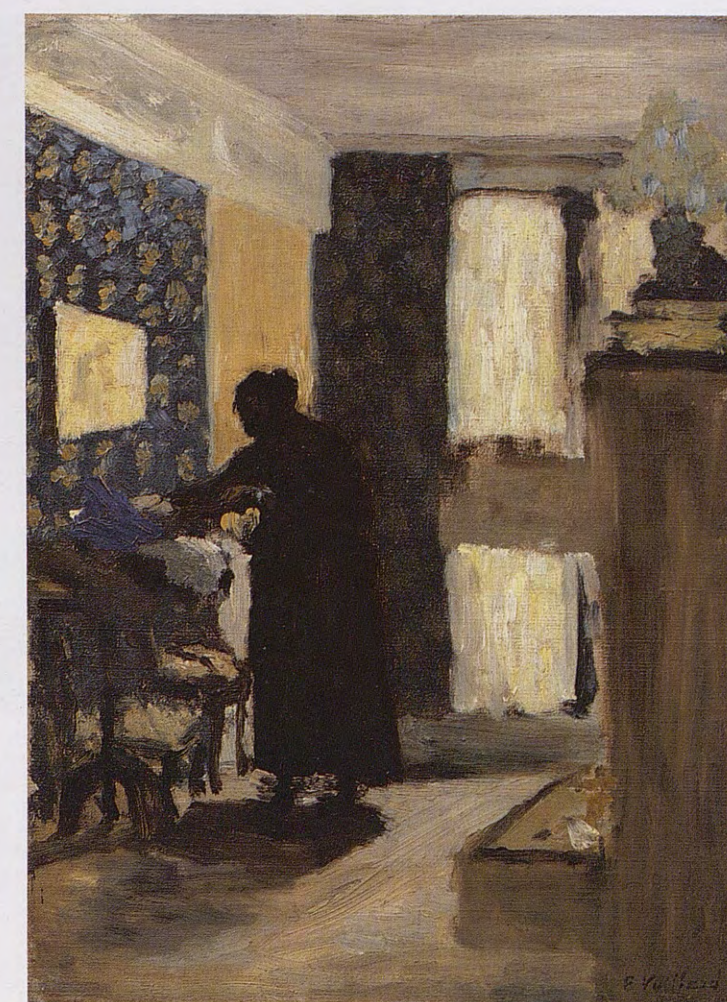
#### IV-56 Madame Vuillard and Her Employees

c. 1892  
Oil on canvas, 40.5 x 32.2 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Girard, Paris – M. Bury, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 23 Nov. 1977, lot 8 (ill.) – Galerie Berès, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 111 (ill.).

**Description:** Four figures in strange postures. The harmony of the composition springs from its black and brown tones. The seated woman's apron and the two faces in the centre are distinctly white. (JS)



IV-57

#### IV-57 The Chiffonnier

c. 1892-94  
Oil on canvas, 33 x 24 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948 (not in cat.) – Paris, Berès, May 1957, no. 69 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 12 (col. ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 44 (ill.) – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1973, no. 5 – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 16 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1968, col. pl. 3 – Georges 1982, p. 76 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 20 (ill.).

**Description:** Through a window framed by dark blue curtains an uncertain light enters the room. A woman stands out starkly against the yellow background of the wall. To the left is a blue floral wall-paper and a painting highlighted by reflections from the window; to the right, a large, dark chiffonier with a drawer pulled open and a table-lamp. (AC)

The floor and ceiling are executed in greyish beige, whilst the wall covering is mainly blue. The chiffonier on the right is rendered in a very cursory manner. Madame Vuillard is shown against the light, a shadowy figure in the middle of the composition, which she dominates, as is her wont. Notice, too, the expressive recession created by the distorted perspective: the picture on the wall is rendered as a trapezoid, producing an effect that is further heightened by the chiffonier's open bottom drawer, into which the eye looks down, whilst the upper drawer remains exactly at eye level. The artist, then, has deliberately exaggerated the perspective of the composition, which has a distinctly Dutch air about it and employs the same kind of expressionistic lighting effects found in sketches in his Journal for 1888 and 1889.





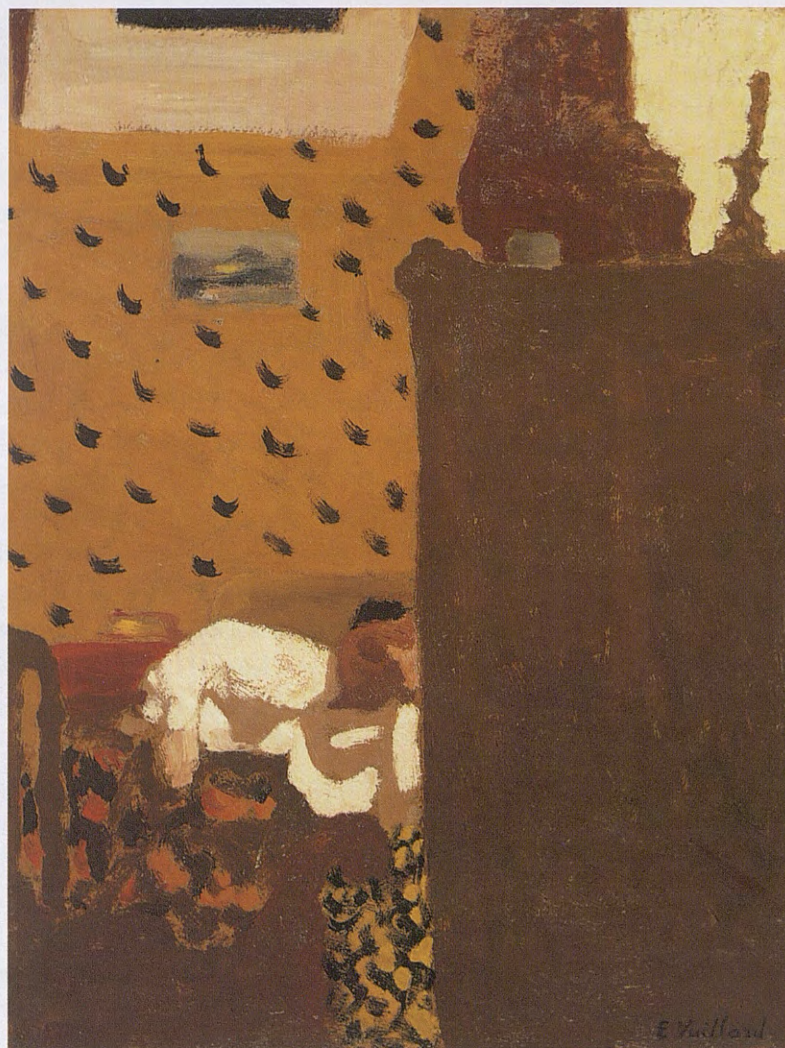
IV-58

#### IV-58 Female Silhouette and Green Cupboard

c. 1892  
Pastel on paper, 35 × 38.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London, c. 1989 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** London, JPL, 1989, no. 39 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 30, p. 45 (col. ill.) [*Woman Coming through a Door*].



IV-59

#### IV-59 Woman by a Chiffonier

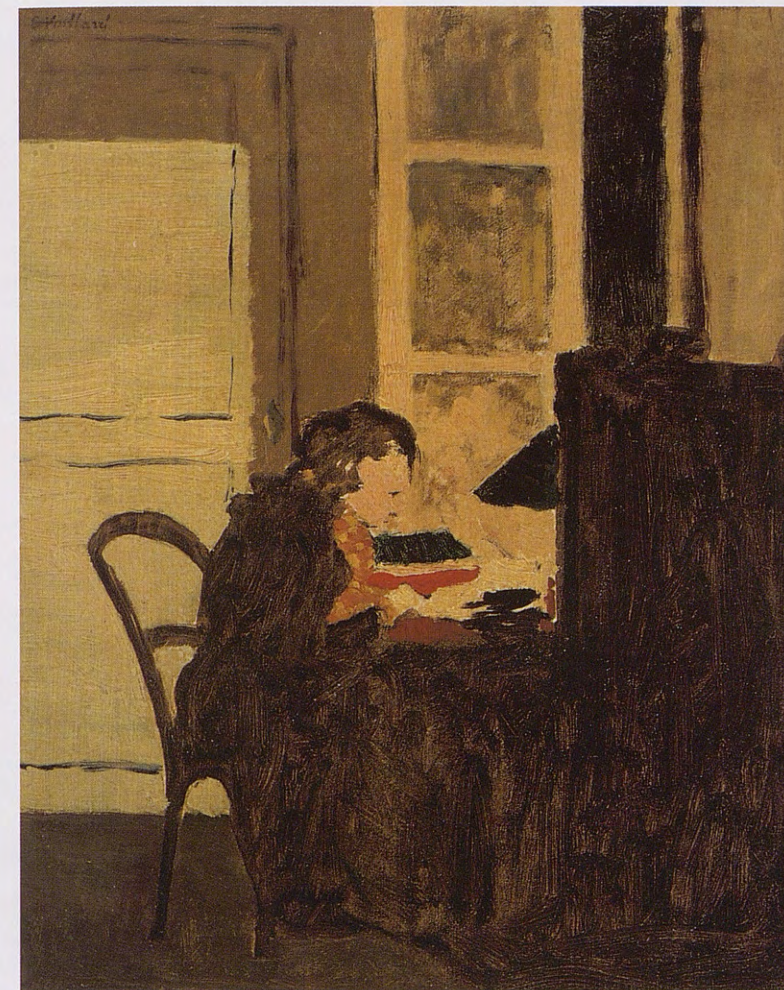
c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 30.5 × 23 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Sale, Christie's, London, 3 July 1981, lot 331A (col. ill.) – Thomas Gibson, London – Montgomery, San Francisco (California) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 April 1987, lot 107 (col. ill.) – Lefevre, London – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 20 June 1988, lot 56 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 10 May 1990, lot 330 (col. ill.) – Eastlake, New York – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** London, Marlborough, 1967, no. 116 (ill.) – Paris, La Cave, 1980 (not in cat.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 30 (ill.) – Berlin, Werner, 1992, no. 4 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, pp. 47-49 – Cousseau and Ananth, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, p. 167 (ill.).

**Description:** A large, brown chiffonier forms a screen in the foreground. A woman in a pink camisole is reclining with one arm upraised amid swatches of fabric, hemmed in by items of furniture whose placing is difficult to determine. Ochre wall flecked with black. On the right, a patch of yellow light, against which the droll silhouette of a candlestick stands out sharply. (AC)



IV-60

#### IV-60 The Writing Desk

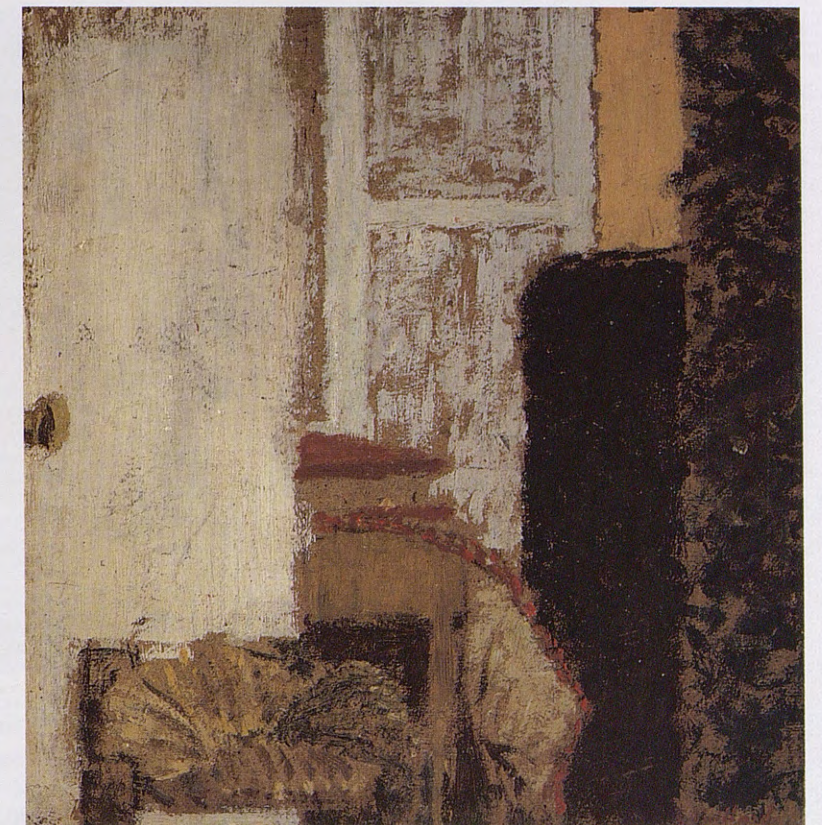
c. 1892  
Oil on canvas, 41.5 × 33 cm  
Stamp 1, upper left  
Art market, Geneva

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 26 June 1984, lot 22 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Christie's, London, 30 Nov. 1987, lot 42 (col. ill.) – Galerie Jan Krugier, Ditesheim et Cie., Geneva.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Didier Imbert, 1985, no. 17 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 29 (ill.) – Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 14, p. 14 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, p. 47.

**Description:** A woman bends forward to write; her silhouette merges with that of the desk. A lamp with a green shade casts its yellow light on the window frame and sheds a pale-coloured rectangle on the door, against which the arabesque of the chair is sharply delineated. (AC)



IV-61

#### IV-61 The Straw Stool

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 28 × 26.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Kunsthandel Sabine Helms, Munich (Germany) – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Description:** The ochre and brown tones of various items of furniture are juxtaposed against a grey door to the left of a window, one side of which is open. The items in the middle are highlighted in vermillion. A stool's straw seat appears in the foreground. An empty interior forming a rich still life. (AC)





IV-62

### IV-62 Hot Chocolate (study)

1892  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 30.5 × 31.8 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Girard, Paris – David Findlay, New York – Roland, Browse & Delbanco, London – E. V. Thaw, New York – William Kelly Simpson, New York.

**Exhibitions:** London, Roland, Browse & Delbanco, 1966, no. 38 (col. ill.) – New York, Wildenstein, 1983, p. 88 – Katonah, Katonah Gallery, 1989, no. 5 (col. ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 59 (ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 12, pp. 86 (col. ill.), 171.

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, p. 85.

### IV-63 Hot Chocolate

1892  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 31.1 × 36.2 cm  
Signed, lower right: *ev*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Collection of Prince Emmanuel Bibesco, Paris – Edward Molyneux, Paris – Sam Salz, New York – Mary and Leigh Block, Chicago (Illinois) – Albert J. Dreitzer, New York – Dreitzer gift to the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham (Massachusetts), 1962 – Sold by the Museum, Christie's, New York, 5 Nov. 1991, lot 38 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.



Cartoon published in *Le Journal*, 31 December 1892.



IV-63

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, 1892, no. 180 [*Déjeuner*] – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 10 [*Breakfast*, 1893] – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 60 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, p. 85.

**Description:** Two female figures wearing housecoats, one striped and the other tartan; their neutral grey tones have the same value as the table-cover upon which a metal chocolate pot stands to the right. A grey door in the background on the right; top left, a glazed partition delineates a light-coloured rectangle. (JS)

This painting was exhibited in 1892 at Le Barc de Bouteville gallery, under the title *Breakfast*. Commenting upon the exhibition in *La Vie artistique* of 28 November 1892, Gustave Geffroy lauded the originality of the 'Zouave' Nabi: 'The scenes depicted by Monsieur Vuillard, *The Woman Asleep*, *Women Darning*, *The Breakfast*, continue to display a delightful, witty *intimisme* in which the melancholic and the comic are skilfully combined, each measured out with a light hand, causing a sparkling of colours to appear, a magical burst of light in the artist's heavily shadowed interiors. We look forward to see-

ing more than just these sketches, these splashes of colour, these bold scatterings of lines – or rather, to seeing all this ordered and given greater depth in a finished work'. Notice the amusing detail of the cup seen from above, which earned Vuillard a cartoon (see ill.) in *Le Journal* of 31 December 1892 (see *Sleep*, II-124), accompanied by a scatological witicism by Yvanhoé Rambosson (one worthy of Père Ubu): 'Are you sure this is chocolate?'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Est-ce bien du chocolat?'

### IV-64 Two Women Drinking Hot Chocolate

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 21.5 × 28.8 cm  
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection, 1970.17.94



IV-64

**Provenance:** Prince Emmanuel Bibesco, Paris; Prince Antoine Bibesco, Paris – Edward Molyneux, Paris – Mrs Ailsa Mellon Bruce, New York, 1955 – Mellon Bruce bequest to the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1970.

**Exhibitions:** Palm Beach, Society of the Four Arts, 1958, no. 47 – San Francisco, Legion of Honor, 1961, no. 68 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1966, no. 180 (ill.); and 1978, p. 100 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 61 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1975, pp. 372 (no. 2466), p. 373 (ill.) – Daniel 1984, pp. 103, 172-173, fig. 33 – Easton 1989, p. 85.

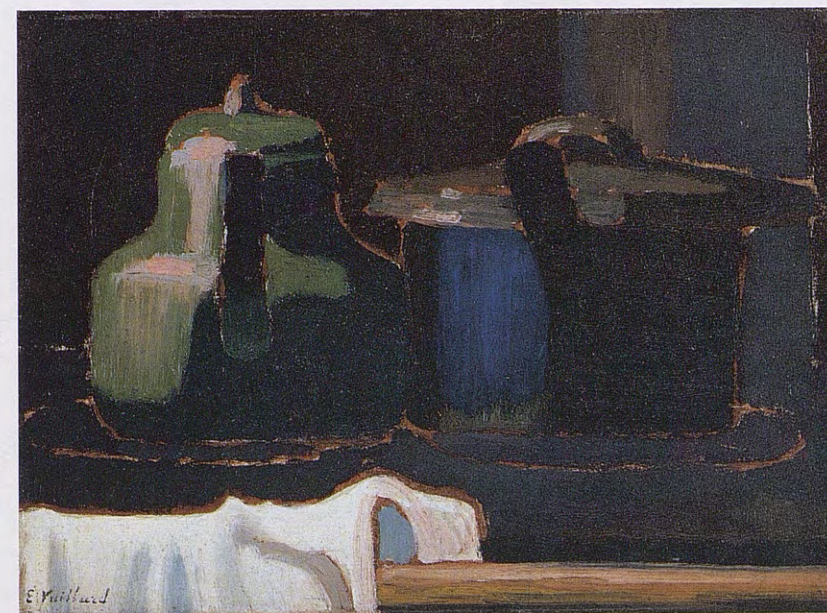
**Description:** Two women wearing beige housecoats; their faces are ochre. The table-cover is olive-green; a fabric with dull-red flowers is draped on the right; the cardboard shows through in the dark-green background of the wall, on the left, against which the backs of the chairs are silhouetted. (JS)

### IV-65 The Loaf of Bread

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 27 × 22 cm  
Stamp 1, upper left  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 26 – Paris, Charpentier, April-June 1954, no. 171 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 24 – Tokyo, Wildenstein, 1974, no. 17 (ill.) – Paris, La Cave, 1980, no. 35.



IV-65



IV-66

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 50.

**Description:** On the edge of a table receding strongly due to a heightened perspective, a loaf of 'pain fendu' with one end roughly broken off rests on a reddish-brown platter, a carafe behind it; a green lampshade lies on its side in the foreground. Grey background. (AC)

### IV-66 Kettle and Pot

c. 1892  
Oil on wood, 24 × 32.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 283.1956

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Roland, Browse & Delbanco, London, 1955 – Lillie P. Bliss bequest to The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1956.

**Exhibition:** London, Roland, Browse & Delbanco, 1956, no. 36.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 50 – Barr 1957, pp. 3, 6 (ill.), 39.

**Description:** A green kettle with patches of pink and a casserole with a pink-and-brown top on a black stove (a white table napkin hangs from its copper bar in the foreground). The rings of the stove and, indeed, all the shapes in the composition are outlined in red. (AC)

### IV-67 The Pheasant

c. 1892-95  
Oil on cardboard, 61 × 59.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Nathan L. Halpern, New York – Private collection, United States.

**Description:** A blue and grey pheasant, hanging by its pink legs, is suspended above an ochre loaf of bread on the brown table. Yellow wood panelling in the background. Green tiles. (AC)



IV-67



## IV-68

## The Salad Shaker

c. 1892

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 26 × 27.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79, no. 2.



IV-68

## IV-69

## The Breakfast Cup

c. 1892

Oil on cardboard, 25.5 × 33 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Girard, Paris, 1941 – Alfred Daber, Paris – Galerie Georges Moos, Geneva, 1944 – Nathan, Zurich (Switzerland) – Private collection, Winterthur (Switzerland).

**Exhibitions:** Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 10 – Winterthur, Kunstmuseum, 1949, no. 222 –

Zurich, 1964, no. 150 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 22 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 46 (ill.) [*La Tasse de café*].

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 42 [*Nature morte tachetée*, c. 1898] (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 34 (ill.) – Schweicher 1949, pp. 29-32, 93 – Georges 1982, p. 71 – Daniel 1984, fig. 96.

**Description:** *On the right, in a colourful flurry of wallpaper and tablecloth patterns, a white breakfast cup decorated in blue, casting a strangely distinct shadow; to the left, an ochre-coloured chair back.* (JS)

This close-up of a commonplace object – the sole protagonist in this small, pictorial drama – foreshadows the highly sophisticated



IV-69



Heinrich Kuehn, *Still Life: Glass and Carafe*, c. 1905, bromoil on beige paper. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

ed framings of the second 'Pictorialist' school in the early twentieth century, in particular that of the Austrian photographer Heinrich Kuehn, a master at making objects appear unreal by dint of rendering their presence all too manifest. In his own photographs Vuillard was never to use this type of close-up, preferring to reserve it exclusively for his sketches.



IV-70

## IV-70

## Breakfast

1892

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 30.7 × 26.6 cm

Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 92*

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Roger Marx, Paris – Marx sale, Galerie Manzi, Joyant & Cie, Paris, 11-12 May 1914, lot 88 [*Le Breakfast*] – Jos Hessel, 3,910 F – Jacques Seligmann, New York – Mrs Emily Milliken Lambert, Paris (Virginia), 1939; Emily Milliken Wilson Estate, Washington D.C., lot 319 (col. ill.) – Private collection, Rochester (New York).

**Exhibitions:** Saint Louis, Art Museum, 1931, no. 41, p. 7 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 65 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 156 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, p. 91.

Vuillard, who always adopts a scenographic vantage-point – that is, one situated on the same plane as the 'spectacle' of his domestic surroundings – gives us here an unusual ele-



IV-71

vated view of a woman taking breakfast. In brown and somewhat murky surroundings, her blouse with its pale-grey and pink squares produces an effect that is both arresting and elegant in the extreme. It imparts slowness to an otherwise hastily sketched composition, suggesting that a narrow depth of field (here a diagonal one) is actually a subtle device for evoking *duration* in painting.

## IV-71

## Madame Vuillard Having a Cup of Hot Chocolate

1892

Oil on cardboard, 18.5 × 22.5 cm

Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 92*

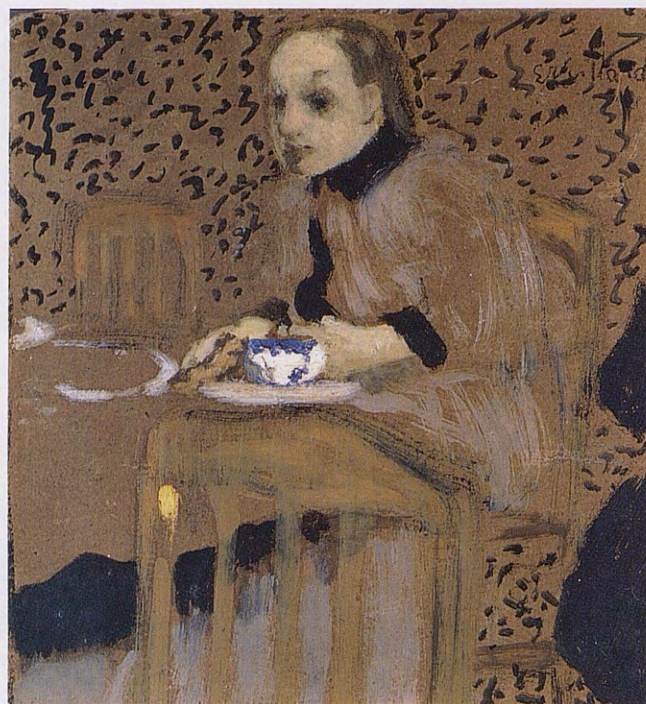
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris, c. 1932 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 39 – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1932, no. 120 (exhibited as the left-hand panel of a triptych) – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1933, no. 348 (idem) – London, Tooth & Sons, 1934, no. 27 (idem) – Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 75 (idem).

**Description:** *Seated on the left, a lady in a housecoat, with a light-coloured handkerchief peeping out of her pocket, faces a table set with two porcelain plates and a chocolate pot. A stool on the right.* (AC)





IV-72

#### IV-72 The Cup of Coffee

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 24 × 22 cm  
Signed, upper right: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris – Private collection – Galerie Bellier, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Brussels, [La Libre Esthétique], 1896, no. 432 – New York, Seligmann, 1930, no. 34 [La Tasse de café, 1893] – Zurich, Kunsthhaus, 1932, no. 121 [La Tasse de lait] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1933, no. 340 – London, Tooth & Sons, 1934, no. 25 – Paris, Petit Palais, 1937, room 15, no. 27 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 20.

**Bibliography:** Bernard 1930, p. 23 – Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 49, et 1968, p. 16.

**Description:** A young woman seated at a table, clad in a housecoat with black trimming, holding a blue cup. The dotted handling of the wall in the background imparts a particularly sketchy feeling to this perfunctory composition. (AC)



IV-73

#### IV-73 The Bowl

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 26 × 19 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Galerie Robert Schmit, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Set on a dark carpet with an ample red pattern, a white bowl with a green shadow stands between two candlesticks and a small vase, which blend into the brown and red tones of the background. A pale-coloured door opening is summarily indicated on the left. (AC)



IV-74

#### IV-74 Madame Vuillard Holding a Cup

c. 1892-93  
Oil on cardboard, 16.5 × 19.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: *EVuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Beltrand, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 18 March 1964, lot 47 (ill.) – Marcel Lecomte, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.



IV-75

#### IV-75 Breakfast at the Window

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 20.5 × 23.1 cm  
Signed, lower left: *ev*  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Carroll Carstairs, New York – Lefevre, London – Private collection, Lausanne (Switzerland), 1970.

**Exhibitions:** London, Lefevre, 1969, no. 18 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 56 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 157 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, p. 83 – Sidlauskas 1997, pp. 99, 100 (ill.).

#### IV-76 Marie Leaning over the Dinner Table

c. 1892  
Pastel on paper, 20.5 × 25 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection, New York

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – Private collection, New York.



IV-76



IV-77

**Exhibition:** London, JPL, spring 1980, no. 23 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Georges 1982, p. 62.

#### IV-77 Two Seamstresses at Work under a Lamp

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, 24.5 × 26.7 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Norton Simon Art Foundation, Pasadena (California) – M.1979.41.2.P

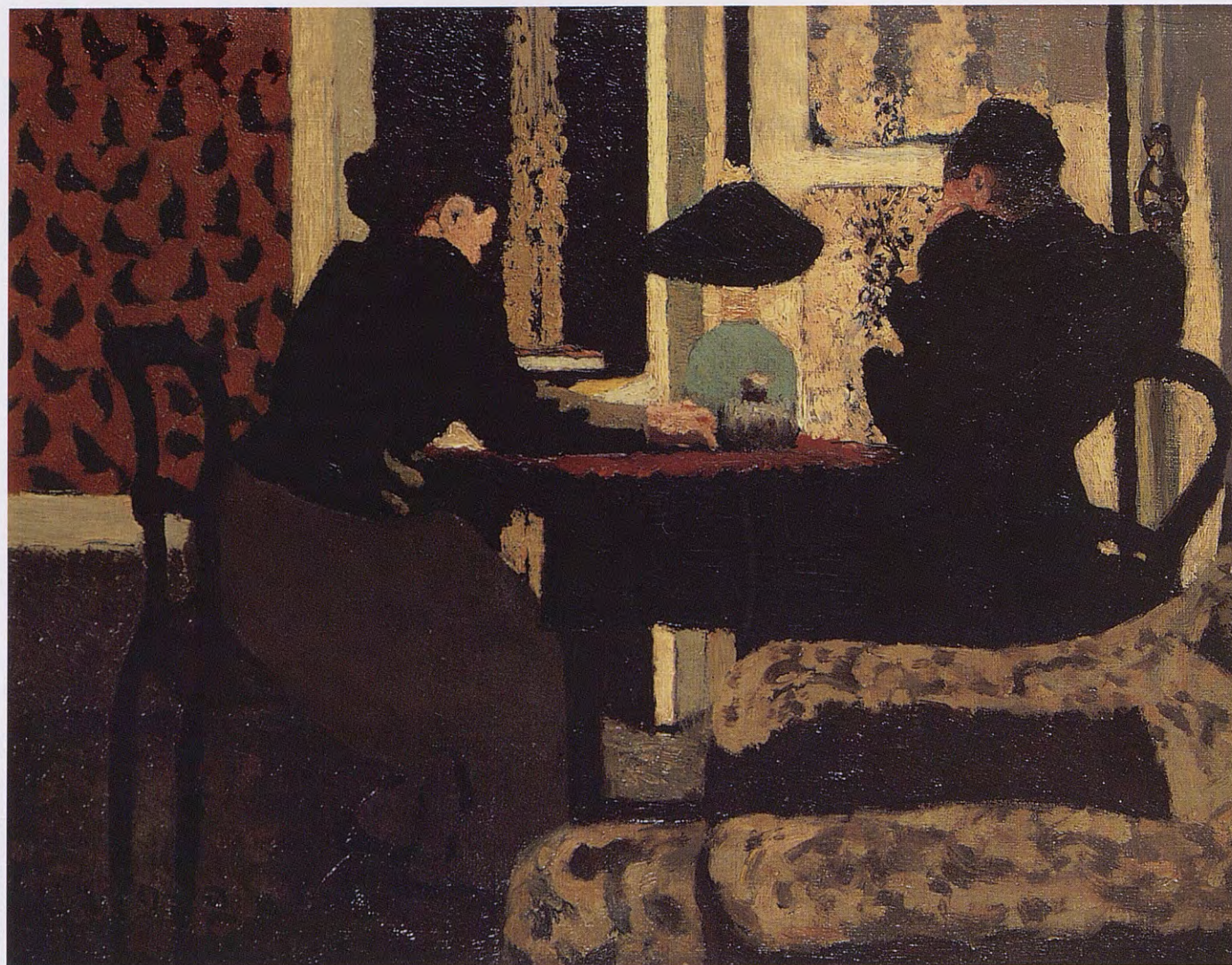
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, c. 1949 – La Cave, Paris – Norton Simon Art Foundation, Pasadena.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 188 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 11 (ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 10.

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1954, p. 48 (ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 76 – Easton 1989, p. 47, fig. 23.

**Description:** The light from a oil lamp consisting of a dark-green sphere topped by a dark lampshade encompasses the table and casts yellow highlights on two seamstresses: one on the right, in a black dress and large white apron; the other on the left, in a blue dress. A parted curtain above the lamp slants away on either side to reveal a fireplace in the background. (AC)





IV-78

#### IV-78 Under the Lamp

1892

Oil on canvas, mounted on cradled panel, 37.5 x 45.5 cm

Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 92*  
Musée de l'Annonciade, St. Tropez (France), D.1955.1.32

**Provenance:** Bernheim-Jeune, Paris – Devolved to Josse Bernheim, Paris, in the Bernheim-Jeune estate, Paris, 1932 – Georges Grammont, Paris – Bequeathed to the French State for deposit at the Musée de l'Annonciade, St. Tropez (France), in 1955.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, 1892, no. 181 [*Sous la lampe*] – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1932, no. 127 [*Intérieur avec deux femmes cousant*, 1893] – Paris, Carré, 1942, no. 7 – Paris, Parvillée, 1943, no. 76 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 42 (ill.) – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 60 – London, Wildenstein, June 1948, no. 8 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 12 –

Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 11 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 161 (col. ill.) – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1952, no. 190 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 38 (ill.), 101 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 15 – Paris-Tokyo, 1988, p. 289 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C., 1989-90, no. 21 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 45, p. 120 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 160, p. 90 (col. ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 13, p. 87 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Muhlfield 1893, pp. 458-459 – *Revue de Paris*, Nov. 1948, p. 137 (ill.) – Mercanton 1949, col. pl. 3 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 6, 33-35, 40, 42, 96-97, 122 – Besson 1952, p. 92 (ill.) – Cooper 1955a, p. 45 – Vildrac 1955, no. 70 – Dorival 1957, pp. 18 (col. ill.), 22 – Dunoyer de Segonzac and Sue 1959, no. 70 (col. ill.) – Kerigan 1961, p. 369 (col. ill.) – Vergnet-Ruiz and Laclotte 1962, pp. 198, 213 (col. pl.), 256 – Jaldard 1966, pp. 44 (col. ill.), 203 – Russoli 1966, col. pl. 3 – Barilli 1967c, p. 124 (col. ill.) – Dugdale 1967a, p. 3 (col. ill.) – *Jardin des arts*, no. 161, April 1968, p. 78 (col. ill.), fig. 3 – Negri 1970, col. pl. 36 – Marinelli 1972, col. pl. 13 – Perucchi-Petri 1972, pp. 30, 33, fig. 3 – Rheims 1973, p. 170 (col. ill.) – Russoli and Martini 1973, col.

pl. 3 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 103-106, 114, fig. 59 – Jaldard 1977, p. 201 (col. ill.) – Mousseigne 1977, pp. 4, 21 (col. ill.) – Mauner 1978, p. 260, fig. 141 – Kravetzhollander 1981, p. 45 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, pp. 76-77 – Prat 1983, p. 46 (col. ill.) – Daniel 1984, fig. 13 – Cogeval 1986, fig. 334 – Kelder 1986, col. fig. 205 – Thomson 1988, p. 85, fig. 76 – Easton 1989, pp. 41-42, 47, 62 – Hild 1989, pp. 39 (col. ill.), 273-274 – Makarius 1989, pp. 58, 59 (col. ill.), 60 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, p. 79 (ill.) – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 20 (ill.) – Exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, Cogeval, p. 118, Dumas, p. 62, and Perucchi-Petri, p. 150 – Forgione 1992, pp. 89, 98, 118, 120, fig. 56 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 43, 44-45 (col. ill.), 46 – Groom 1993, p. 28, col. fig. 39 – Monery 1993, pp. 49, 52 (col. ill.) – Koella, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, pp. 94, 102, col. fig. 1.

**Description:** Two women in black on either side of a table, sewing by the glow of a oil lamp with a green lampshade. The light particularly illuminates the figure on the left, the window frame in the background and the wallpaper. A large armchair in the right foreground, covered with a floral fabric, thrusts its elongated arms into our field of vision. (JS)

In comparison with the other sketches presented in the November exhibition at the Le Barc de Bouteville gallery, *Under the Lamp* gives the impression of being a wholly controlled and finished work. Quite rightly one of the most famous paintings in Vuillard's entire oeuvre, it is the artist's first bravura display of 'hyperbolic' perspective: the table is seen at eye-level, whilst the armchair is viewed from an increasingly elevated position, although, to be sure, at first glance we do not recognize it for what it is. Vuillard describes the wanderings of the optical nerve that 'ignites' the objects placed at the centre of the composition. Under the lamplight, he unfolds the adventurous journey of the eye, which selects whatever interests it and leaves unfocused whatever tends to fall outside the picture frame. In this masterly demonstration, the artist draws upon *intimisme* and the fashions of the day to create a disquieting scene, a drama of impenetrable sounds and elaborate lighting effects. The stillness of the scene is gainsaid by the loud flapping of the crows we glimpse, or think we glimpse, on the wallpaper, though they, too, are but an expressive reification, another illusion from Vuillard's customary bag of tricks.

The bodices of the two women – like silhouettes of the Chat Noir's emblematic black cat – resemble blots of ink. It is hard to avoid the interferences between these two metonymies. Corseted like shadows each in her own compartmentalised darkness, mother and sister give off an almost electric tension in the atmosphere. Huddled on their perches, as it were, they reinforce the ornithological metaphor of the wallpaper and establish that connection between motherhood and birds that Freud was to expound a few years later in *A Childhood Memory of Leonardo da Vinci* (1910), but which numerous artists close to Symbolism were already dimly anticipating.

The artist skilfully transposes his knowledge of stage lighting to a small canvas. The black lamp interposed between mother and daughter could be a foretoken of German Expressionist theatre, with its triangular light-sources converging starkly on the centre of the stage. 'The light-source thus becomes a source of darkness, as though the essential thing for

Vuillard were to show light for itself, rather than for what it illuminates. Indeed, the artist harks back to an ancient symbolism that sees a beating heart in the flickering of the flame, and the everlasting nature of the soul in the effulgence of a light-source. Invested with ontological value, light is like the *double*, the hidden dimension, of being.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Un souvenir d'enfance de Léonard de Vinci*, ch. 1, Paris, Gallimard, coll. 'Idées', reprinted 1977.

<sup>2</sup> Makarius 1989, pp. 58 and 60.

#### IV-79 At Table, Lunch

1892

Oil on canvas, 32 x 46 cm

Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Alfred Athis Natanson, Paris; Denise Tabah (née Natanson), Rueil-Malmaison (France) – Sam Salz, New York – Ralph F. Colin, New York, 1950 – Colin sale, Christie's, New York, 10 May 1995, lot 9 (col. ill.) – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris – Tom James Co. / Oxxford Clothes, United States – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 17 [*La Table*] – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1951 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 43

(col. ill.), 102 – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1955, p. 21 – New York, Knoedler, 1960, no. 13 (ill.) – Chicago, 1972, no. 35 (ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 24, p. 95 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Barr 1951, p. 530, no. 2 – *Art News* 50, June-August 1951, p. 36 (ill.) – *Art Digest*, 1 August 1951, p. 17 (ill.) – *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* 22, no. 4, summer 1955, p. 16 (ill.) – Preston 1971, fig. 22 – Exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, p. 60 – Georges 1982, p. 77 – Daniel 1984, fig. 63 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 131-134, fig. 41 – Varnedoe 1987, p. 67, fig. 13d – Easton 1989, pp. 62-65, 68-69, col. fig. 41 – Forgione 1992, p. 118, fig. 67.

A lamp again dominates the centre of the composition, but here the scene is set during the day. The subtle back-lighting already appears in several sketches in Vuillard's Journal.<sup>1</sup> The picture is characterized by puppet-like faces, stiff poses and an air of intense animation. Its atmosphere, as Patricia Ciaffa observes, is reminiscent of



Henri Matisse, *Dinner Table*, 1897, oil on canvas. Private collection.



IV-79



Signac's *After-Lunch Coffee*,<sup>2</sup> though, unlike his contemporary, Vuillard does not seek to caricature the post-prandial digestings of the bourgeoisie. The comparison with Matisse's *Dinner Table* (see ill.) is probably more illuminating: the similarity between the two laid tables is obvious, as is the manner in which the light filters through the carafes. Vuillard's composition, however, is more dynamic, less hieratic; with its ruthless portrayal of bodies in deliberately exaggerated postures – that of the servant who appears in the doorway, intruding on a moment of family intimacy, for instance – it foreshadows the caricatural style of the *Répertoire des Pantins*.<sup>3</sup> Vuillard himself is absent from the scene; in the foreground, in the very centre of the composition, he leaves the delicious detail of an uneaten chicken leg, a synecdoche for his 'pseudomartyrology', a sign or relic of the 'autumnal cannibalism' in which his tribe has been indulging.

Once again Vuillard offers up his body in hypothetical sacrifice, and it is to him, therefore, that it befalls to distribute the bread and wine to those around him. In this brilliant caricature, he again commiserates with himself in a proto-Expressionist manner. The splendid effect of the daylight streaming through the window lattice justifies the heavy impasto found here and there and the highlights scattered throughout the composition in small, thick strokes. This is one of Vuillard's last works to portray his grandmother, Madame Michaud.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1, fols. 26r, 28r, 32r, 34r, 39v.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Signac, *After-Lunch Coffee* (called *Breakfast* by the museum), 1886-87, oil on canvas, 90 x 116.8 cm, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo.

<sup>3</sup> 'Repertoire of the Pantins'. The programme of the Théâtre des Pantins, whose guiding spirits were Alfred Jarry, Franc-Nohain and Charles Terrasse; Bonnard and Vuillard being in charge of the sets.

#### IV-80

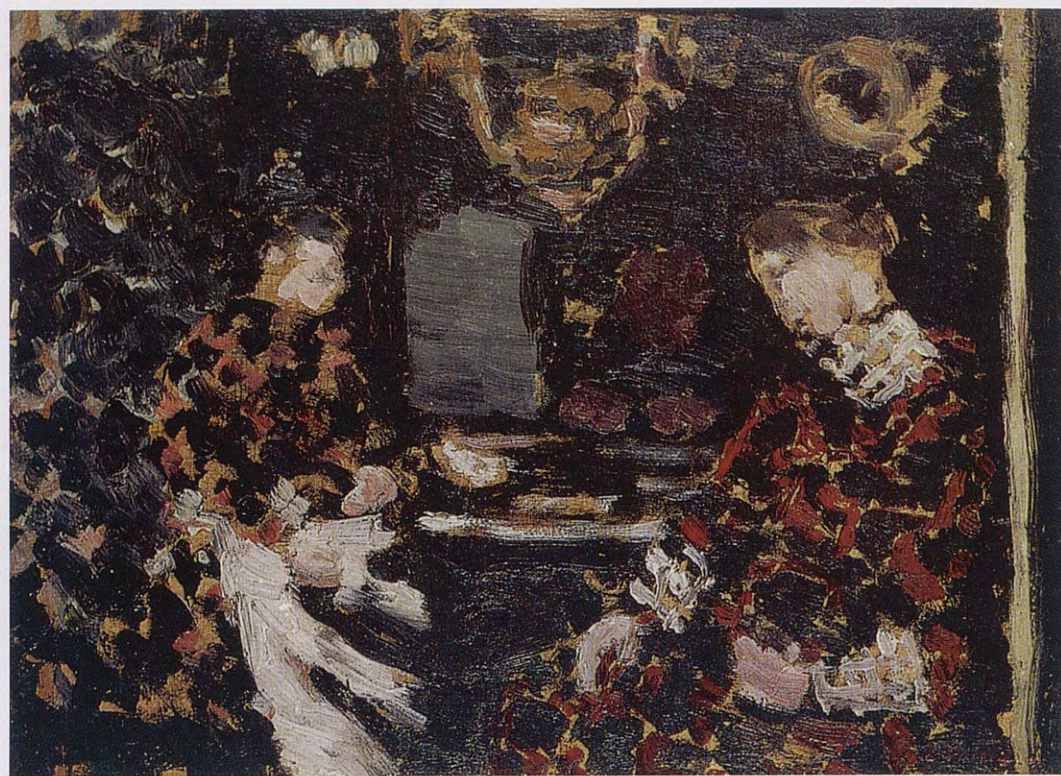
### Two Women beneath a Ceiling Lamp

c. 1892

Oil on hardboard, 23 x 31.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Art market, London



IV-80

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Cadby-Birch, New York – Larry Aldrich, New York – Aldrich sale, Sotheby's, New York, 30 Oct. 1963, lot 15 (ill.), bought in – Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield (Connecticut) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 10 Dec. 1969, lot 72, (ill.) – Marlborough, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 29 June 1977, lot 120 (col. ill.), bought in.

**Exhibitions:** New York, World House Gallery, 1957, no. 91 – Richmond-Atlanta, 1959, no. 58 (ill.) – United States, travelling exhib., 1960-62, no. 60 – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 12 (ill.) – University Park, The Pennsylvania State University, 1968, no. 1 (ill.).

**Description:** Two women seated on either side of a round table. Dabs of red, white and black, producing an impression of tonal values in the darkness. (AC)

#### IV-81

### Madame Vuillard Drinking from a Glass

c. 1892

Oil on cardboard, 19.7 x 15.2 cm

Stamp 4, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Nathan, Zurich (Switzerland) – Alexander Rabow, San Francisco (California) – William Roth, San Francisco, c. 1957 – Current whereabouts unknown.



IV-81

**Bibliography:** *Art et Industrie* 2, Feb. 1946, p. 70 (ill.).

**Description:** Two women, one on the left in blue with a yellow face, the other on the right in grey with a pink face, both depicted in soft, flat tones. Background of orange hue. A note of red from the wine; a roast on the left. A fairly rough sketch. (AC)



IV-82

#### IV-82

### Ailing Woman Seated by Her Bed

1892-93

Oil on canvas, 38.1 x 45.7 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Private collection, Dallas (Texas).

**Exhibition:** Dallas, Museum of Art, 1978, no. 52 (ill.).

**Description:** The woman's profile stands out against the bright red of an eiderdown on a metal bed; a white cloth is laid on her knees. Her bonnet and headband are scratched in with a palette knife. A brown band on the wall to the left. (AC)

#### IV-83

### The Grandmother's Bed

c. 1893

Pastel on paper, 27.5 x 24 cm

Stamp 3, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, Australia – Marcel Marceau – Paul Prouté, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 13 Oct. 1993, lot 32A (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.



IV-83

#### IV-84

### Woman Sitting by a Sickbed

1893

Pastel on paper, 29 x 23 cm

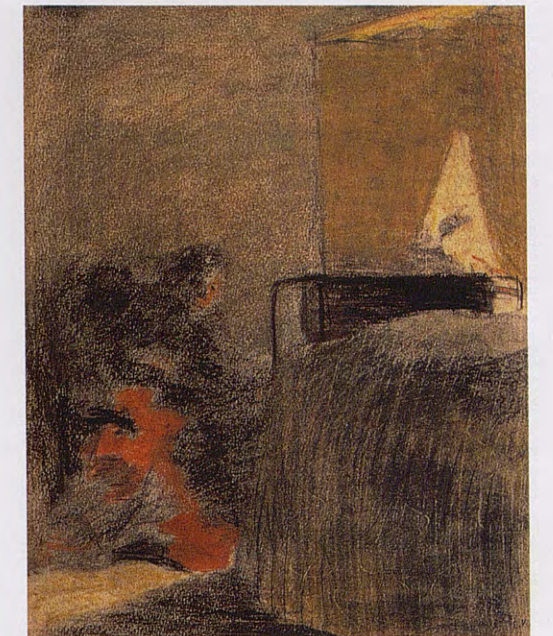
Stamp 3, lower right

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, P. 5-80

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London – The Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

**Exhibitions:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79, no. 22 (col. ill.) – London, JPL, spring 1980, no. 15 (ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 11.

This is perhaps a portrait of Madame Vuillard by the bedside of her dying mother.



IV-84

Grand-mère Michaud died on 9 January 1893, with all her kin gathered around her. Her death deeply affected Vuillard. Two of his lithographs were very likely inspired by the atmosphere of intense mourning that pervaded the household in the ensuing weeks (see ill.).<sup>1</sup> In *Interior with Five Poses*, with its white-robed 'intruder' bursting in, we are pre-



E. V., *Interior with Five Poses*, c. 1893, lithograph, 24 x 29.5 cm.



E. V., *Interior with a Screen*, c. 1893, lithograph, 24 x 31 cm.

sented with precisely the kind of scene found in a Maeterlinck play. The second lithograph, *Interior with a Screen*, depicts the room that was later to be for Marie's bridal chamber (*Interior with a Red Bed*, IV-133); in the foreground we recognize the artist's sister, overcome by grief while life flows on sluggishly around her.

<sup>1</sup> Roger-Marx 1948a, nos. 7 and 8.



#### IV-85

### At the Dinner Table

(preparatory sketch)

c. 1893

Oil on cardboard, 22 × 25.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Art market, Geneva

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alex Maguy, Paris – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Ian Hollick, Great Britain, 1964 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 15 April 1970, lot 50 (ill.) – Spencer Samuels, New York – Fletcher Jones, Los Angeles (California) – Jones sale, Christie's, London, 2 Dec. 1975, lot 30 (ill.) – José Adolfo F. Escarzaga – JPL Fine Arts, London – Galerie Reymondin, Geneva.

**Exhibitions:** London, Tooth & Sons, April-May 1969, no. 19 (ill.) [Vuillard et sa grand-mère, 1897] – Salzburg, Salis, 1985, no. 17 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, p. 137, fig. 45.

**Description:** A nebulous sketch. A bearded man (Frédéric Henry?) in a brown suit scantily illuminated by the dull light of a lamp with pink shade on the right; he is seated at table, with two other persons. (AC)



IV-85



IV-86

#### IV-86

### The Family at the Dinner Table

c. 1893

Oil on cardboard, 19.5 × 26 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 Dec. 1965, lot 33 (ill.) – Frederic Papert, New York – Private collection, New York.

#### IV-87

### Family Meal

1893

Oil on cardboard, 29.2 × 25.4 cm

Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 93*

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1984.433.25

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Roger Marx, Paris – Marx sale, Galerie Manzi, Joyant & Cie, 11-12 May 1914, lot 89 [*Repas de famille*], 2,900 F – Alphonse Kahn, Paris – Scotfield Thayer, United States – Lent to the Worcester Art Museum, Worcester (Massachusetts) – Scotfield Thayer bequest to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1982.



IV-87

**Exhibitions:** New York, Montross, 1924, no. 42 – Northampton, Smith College, 1924 – Worcester, Art Museum, 1924, no. 36 – Chicago, Art Institute, 1938-39, no. 29 – Washington D.C., Phillips Memorial Gallery, 1939, no. 10 – Boston, Institute of Modern Art, 1944, no. 22 – Columbus-Akron-Worcester, 1952-53, no. 36 – Worcester, Art Museum, 1959, no. 84 (ill.), 1965, 1971 and 1981, no. 146.

**Bibliography:** *The Dial* 79, no. 3, Sept. 1925, col. pl. 31 – Joost 1964, pp. 268-269 (ill.) – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 135-136, fig. 44.

**Description:** A fair-haired young man holding forth at table, between Madame Vuillard on the left and a woman, of whom we see only the profile, arm and shoulder, to the right. A grey harmony enlivened by the bright accent of the flowers against the tablecloth. (JS)

The central figure may well be Julien Magnin, a close friend of the artist between 1888 and 1895 (see *Portrait of Julien Magnin*, I-91, and *Schematized Portrait of Julien Magnin*, II-26), come to raise the spirits of the Vuillard ladies in mourning for *grand-mère* Michaud. Despite the passing years, the 'Condorcet band' remained staunchly loyal to Vuillard.





IV-88

#### IV-88 Backlit Interior

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 23.3 × 18.8 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Rosengart, Lucerne (Switzerland) – Fred Uhler, Neuchâtel (Switzerland), 1946 – Sale, Phillips, London, 1 Dec. 1986, lot 24 (col. ill.) – Galerie Bellier, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Neuchâtel, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, 1956, no. 189; and 1975, no. 98.

**Bibliography:** Schweicher 1949, pp. 30, 37, 69, 91.

**Description:** A woman in black is seated in the bright rectangle of light streaming in from a back room through an open door in the centre. The beige and pink floor of the front room is illuminated right up to the foreground, and in the shadowy lower left corner one discerns the back and one arm of an armchair. (AC)



IV-89

#### IV-89 The Laid Table

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 28.5 × 35 cm  
Signed, upper left: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Alfred Athis Natanson, Paris; Denise Tabah (née Natanson), Rueil-Malmaison (France) – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – René Masurel, Roubaix (France) – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 30 Nov. 1970, lot 122 (ill.) – Alfred Daber, Paris and Hervé Odermatt, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 28 June 1972, lot 41 (col. ill.) – Bram Goldsmith, Beverly Hills (California) – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, Oct.-Nov. 1893, no. 9 – Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 51 [*Le Pain*].

**Bibliography:** Vaillant 1974, p. 23 – Makarius 1989, p. 56 (col. ill.).

The angle chosen by the artist for this room seems to be the same as in the following *Interior* (IV-90). Unfortunately, the picture suffers from excessive varnishing. The colours are bright: the loaf of bread and the table legs are red, the carpet blue, the frame of the door pale green. Note that the artist uses a pastel technique for the ochre and brown tones.

#### IV-90 Interior, Evening Light

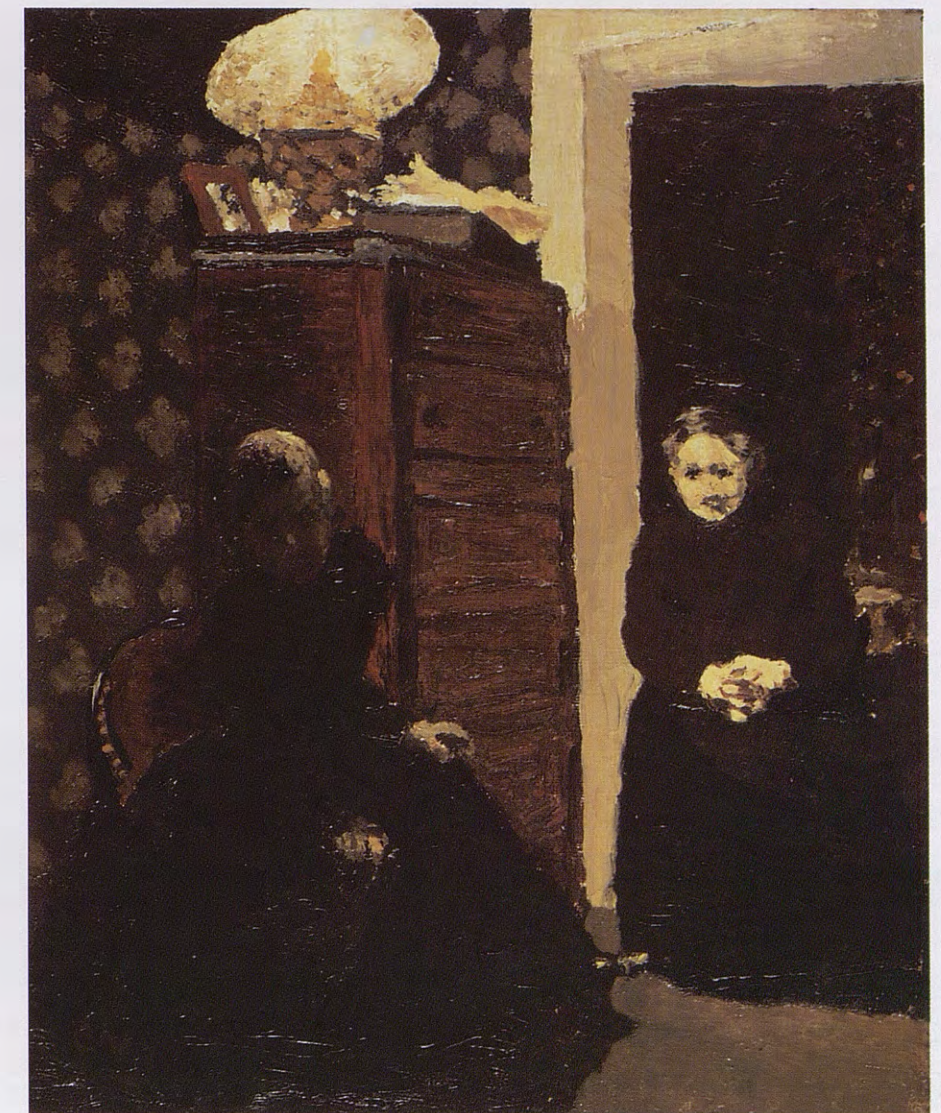
1893  
Oil on canvas, 46 × 38 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 93*  
Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Winterthur (Switzerland), Inv. 639

**Provenance:** Arsène Alexandre, Paris – Alexandre sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 18-19 May 1903, lot 35 [*Dans un intérieur*] – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 13181), 235 F – Heinrich Thannhauser, Berlin, 23 Feb. 1909, 600 F – Oscar Miller, Solothurn (Switzerland) – E. Richard Bühler, Winterthur – Bought with the aid of the Galeriesverein (The Friends of the Kunstmuseum), by the Kunstmuseum, Winterthur, 1935.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, Oct.-Nov. 1893, no. 5 – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1932, no. 126 [*Intérieur, deux femmes*, 1893] – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 3 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 172 (ill.) – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 191 [*Dans un intérieur*] – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 23 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 14 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 54 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 165 (col. ill.) – Winterthur, Villa Flora, 1999-2000, no. 37, p. 13 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Rumpel 1949, pp. 138-145, pl. 25 – Dorival 1957, p. 22 – Mauner 1971-72, pp. 125-126 – Koella 1976, no. 969 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 116-119, 130, fig. 72 – Mauner 1978, p. 260 – Chave 1980, pp. 13-14, fig. 2 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 210-217, fig. 91 – Easton 1989, pp. 83-84 – Koella and Schwartz 1991, p. 31 (col. ill.) – Sidlauskas 1997, pp. 95, 96 (ill.) – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Winterthur, 1999-2000, pp. 12, 13 (col. ill.), 15.

The two women in mourning express the *genius loci* of the room they are cloistered in, much as the Kapferer brothers would do later in their drawing-room (IX-205), the Bernheim brothers in their gallery (IX-204) and Lucy and Jos Hessel in their apartment in the rue de Naples. 'The contrast between the vivid beige and the deep brown, black and red tones imparts a dramatic dimension to the picture, that recalls the late portraits of Rembrandt.'<sup>1</sup> *Interior, Evening Light* appears to repeat chiaroscuro effects already found in the artist's *Journal* towards 1888-89; the lampshade, with its strange oval that seems to levitate, casts an oblique halo of light around Marie's head. Although depicted in a fairly low-key man-



IV-90

ner here, the dominant/submissive relationship between the two women is manifest in the marked contrast between the mother's placid attitude and the daughter's somewhat unbalanced posture, in a perspective distorted by the chiffonier. If we consider the composition from the viewpoint of a portrait photographer, we might observe that the mother 'keeps a steady pose', whereas her daughter, clearly ill-at-ease, cannot stop fidgeting. Vuillard's hidden artistic purpose, then, is to *pin down* his sister much as a butterfly is pinned in an entomologist's display case, and this at a time when the artist did not yet own the Kodak camera with which he later regularly took snapshots of his family and friends. A few years earlier, however, he had already shown himself to be aware of the gulf that separates photography from painting: 'The expressive means of painting can produce an analogy, not a virtual snapshot of the

instant. Oh, how different is a snapshot from an Image'.<sup>2</sup> At this crucial juncture when Vuillard was coming into his own as an artist, a 'scenography of the instantaneous' tinged with fatalism underpins the taut poetry of his interiors. Moreover, in his small, deceptively simple paintings, the artist is forever scattering allusions to time-honoured myths embodied by his mother and sister, transformed into bourgeois incarnations of the central divinities in the Eleusinian mysteries, Demeter and Persephone: on the one hand, there is the immovable earth with its centripetal forces and dominion over time; on the other, a girl who is the plaything of two opposing principles, day and night, spring and winter – or, more simply, of a craving for movement, for the *perpetuum mobile* of life.

<sup>1</sup> Perucchi-Petri 1976, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 6 Sept. 1890, I.2, fol. 21r.





IV-91

#### IV-91 Conversation by Lamplight

c. 1893  
Oil on cardboard, 28 × 26.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1981-82, no. 60.

**Description:** *The profile of a man seated sideways with his elbows propped on the back of his chair is visible in the shadows on the left. He appears to be conversing with a lady, who is seated too. The light from a blue lamp with a green shade falls on her face and clothes.* (JS)



IV-93



IV-92

#### IV-92 The Game of Dominoes

c. 1892  
Pastel on paper, 37 × 20.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
**The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago** (Illinois), 1956.35

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Mary and Leigh Block, Chicago – Block gift to The Art Institute of Chicago.

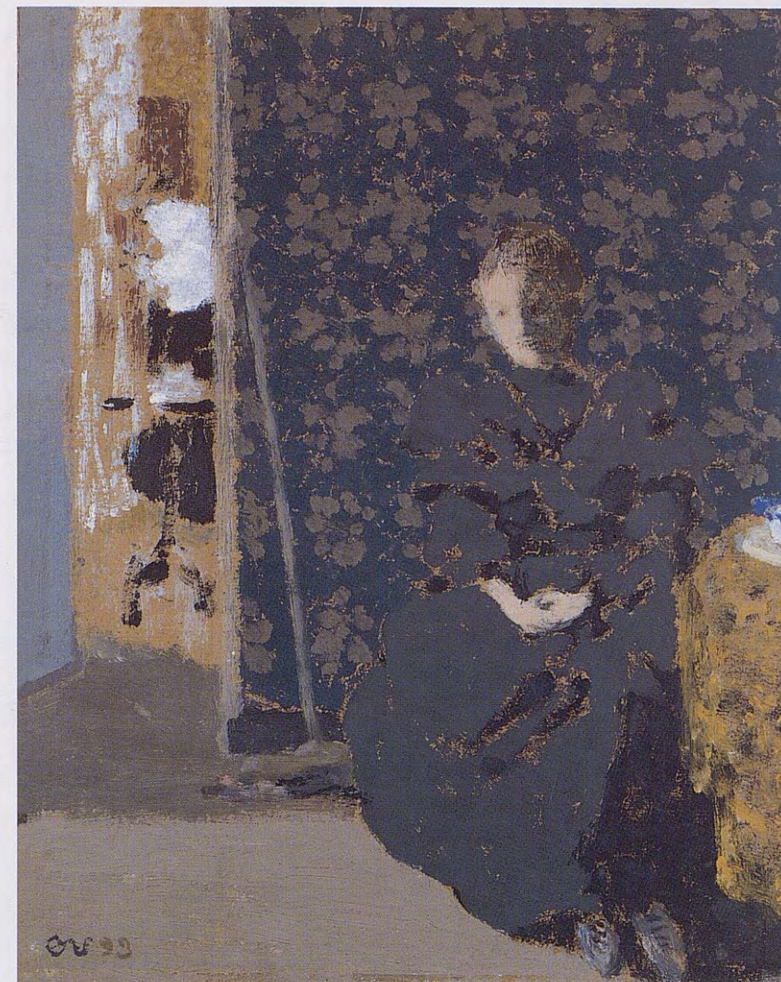
**Description:** *Two women in black are silhouetted playing at dominoes on a red table in front of a red-and-black floral wallpaper. This exaggerated sketch is delimited by a black line above and a red one beneath.* (AC)

#### IV-93 Madame Vuillard Seated

c. 1893  
Oil on cardboard, 27 × 23 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Mexico

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – M. Klemp, Courbevoie (France) – E. V. Thaw, New York – Private collection, Mexico.

**Description:** *A frontal portrayal of the artist's mother in a dark dress. Her face is red, and her left elbow is propped on the arm of her chair.* (JS)



IV-94

#### IV-94 Interior with Seated Figure

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 35.5 × 29.1 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 93*  
**Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, Cambridge** (Great Britain), PD.1-1994

**Provenance:** Arsène Alexandre, Paris – Alexandre sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 18-19 May 1903, lot 78 [*Figure assise*] – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 13182), 175 F – Oscar Schmitz, Dresden and Zurich, 26 May 1904, 400 F – J. W. Freshfield, Esq., Great Britain – Mayor, London – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London, 1941 – Wildenstein, New York, 1946 – Private collection, London – Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, 1994.

**Exhibitions:** Zurich-Basle, 1932, no. 71 – Paris, Wildenstein, 1936, no. 62 – Adelaide, Art Gallery, 1939, no. 144 – London, Tooth & Sons, April-May 1969, no. 7 (ill.) – Florence, 1998, no. 62, p. 101 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Scheffler 1920-21, p. 186 – Rubinstein 1936, no. 62, p. 133 (ill.) – Ciaffa 1985,

pp. 180-184, 322, fig. 65 – Cogeval, exhib. cat., Florence, 1998, p. 189.

**Description:** *A young girl in black, shown full-face seated with her hands folded in her lap, against a dark-blue floral-pattern wallpaper. To the left is an open door leading to another room.* (JS)

To an unprecedented degree, Vuillard here exhibits his innate feeling for atmospheric 'gravity'; the space he creates in this composition is heavy with the sluggishness of time trickling away. Marie is in mourning for *Grand-mère* Michaud, who died in January 1893. Her posture clearly bespeaks her grief. Her dull grey dress blends with the large grey-blue floral motifs of the wallpaper. The folds of the fabric are indicated by the cardboard support showing through. In the background, behind a half-open door, Madame Vuillard goes about her business in a more brightly lit space. The close atmosphere, the scant light and, above all, the subtle division between the two 'environments' recall Dutch painting, which Vuillard will have had occasion to study in the course of his daily visits to the Lou-

vre; Jan Steen, Gerard Dou and Pieter de Hooch all spring to mind, the latter's *Woman Preparing Vegetables with a Child* in particular (see ill.). On 22 November 1888, the artist wrote in his Journal: 'Afternoon at the Lou-



Pieter de Hooch,  
*Woman Preparing  
Vegetables with a Child*,  
c. 1657, oil on panel,  
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

vre, the Steens, lighting à la Besnard... distinction of the Terburg-Metsus [for Gerard Ter Borch and Gabriel Metsu].'<sup>1</sup> A few months previously, Arsène Alexandre – the picture's first owner – had stressed Vuillard's Dutch 'ancestry': 'There is in you the stuff of a modern Pieter de Hooch. You have a feeling for harmony and intimacy (*intimité*); and, as you are not infatuated with yourself, you will develop, as I keenly hope you do, these two fine painterly qualities.'<sup>2</sup> The first of Vuillard's lithographs to be published in *La Revue Blanche* (July 1893) takes up the subject and lay-out of this painting (see ill.) and was published facing an arti-



E. V., *Interior*, lithograph  
published in *La Revue  
Blanche*, July 1893,  
19 × 12 cm.

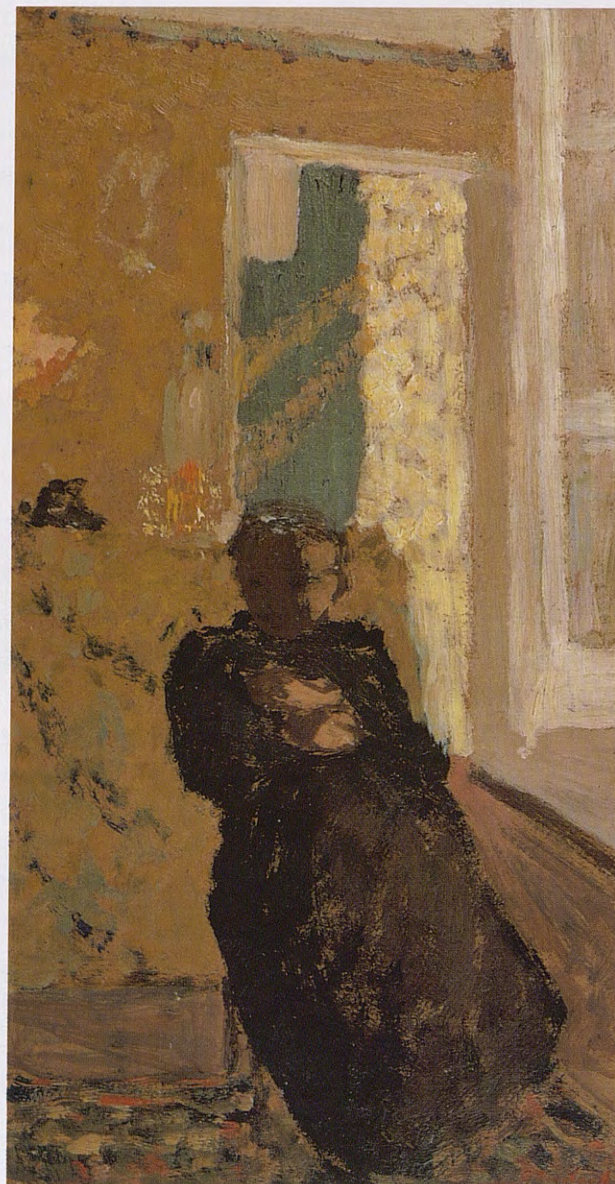
cle by Vuillard's friend Pierre Veber, entitled '*L'authentique histoire de Barbe-Bleue*'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, I.1, fols. 11 and 12v.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Arsène Alexandre to E. V., after 21 July 1892, Salomon archives.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Véber, 'L'authentique histoire de Barbe-Bleue' ('The True Story of Bluebeard'), *La Revue Blanche*, July, 1893, pp. 1-9.





IV-95

# IV-95 Lady in Black, Seated

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 43 × 23 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Lefevre, London – Sir Warwick Fairfax, Sydney (Australia), 1955 – Ernest Brown & Phillips, The Leicester Galleries, Nevill Keating Pictures, London – Sassoli de Bianchi, New York – Private collection – Sale, Christie's London, 8 February 2001, lot 136 (col. ill.), bought in.

**Description:** An open window, an ochre-coloured wall and a door on the right, through which we glimpse a band of light-yellow sunlight on a second, dark-green wall. Slanting through the doorway are two misty sunbeams. A seated lady in black is seen

*à contre jour* against a red-and-green rug; the right side of her figure is faintly edged with light, and her hands glow softly in the shadow. (AC)

# IV-96 Woman Standing, Hands on Hips

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 21 × 19 cm  
Signed and dated, upper left: *ev* 93  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Luc-Albert Moreau, Paris – Feilchenfeldt, Zurich (Switzerland) – Paul Rosenberg, New York, 1962 – Paul Mellon, Upperville (Virginia), 1967 – Given to *The National Appeal to save the Stubbs Haymakers and Reapers* to be sold, Tate Gallery, London, 8 Dec. 1977 – Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London.



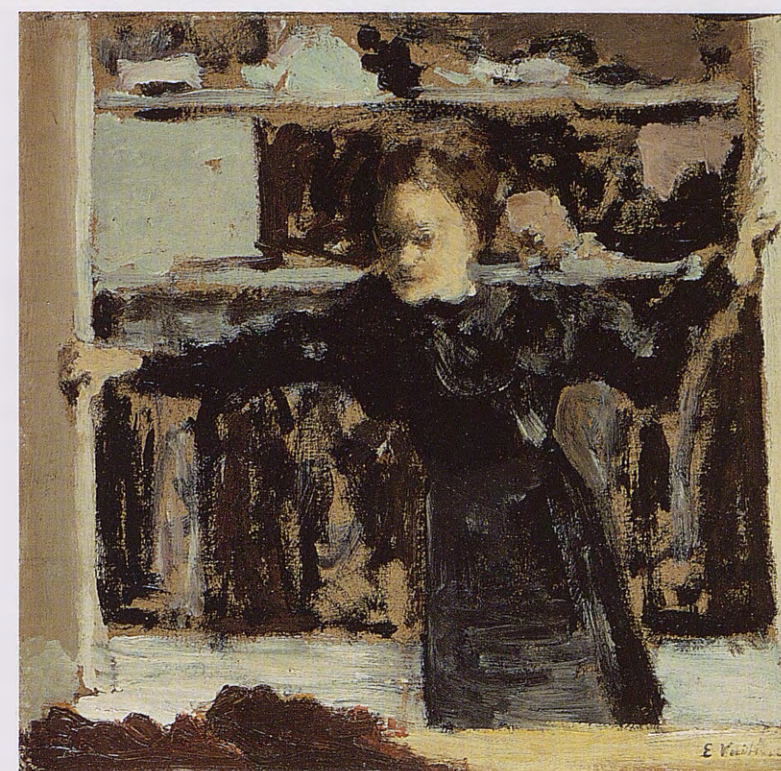
IV-96

**Exhibition:** Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 62 (loaned by Vuillard).

# IV-97 Marie Opening a Window

1893  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 27 × 28.6 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York – Frank Sinatra, Palm Springs (California) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 27 June 1977, lot 10 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Christie's, New York, 15 Nov. 1990, lot 210 (col. ill.) – Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.



IV-97



E. V., sketch from the '1893' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 5.9 x 10.9 cm. Private collection.

# IV-98 Woman Ironing

c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 21.5 × 25.5 cm  
Signed, lower left: *ev*  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Alfred Athis Natanson, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Osaka, Fujikawa Head Gallery, 1969, no. 4 (col. ill.) – Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 4 (col. ill.) – Stuttgart, Kunsthaus Bühler, 1996, p. 28 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A young woman wearing a black dress and apron spreads her arms wide as if she were opening a window. Multicoloured shelves in the background. A piece of red fabric on the edge of a table forms a bright patch in the left foreground. (AC)

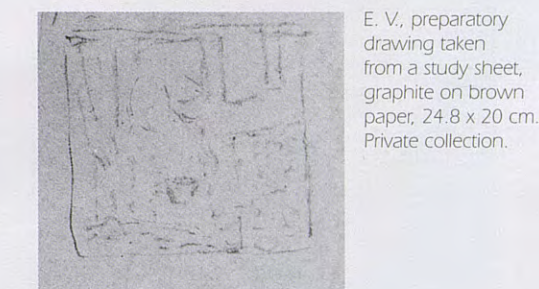
A rough drawing of this painting can be found in the artist's '1893 sketchbook' (see ill.). Marie is shown throwing open a window, a movement that symbolizes the new life she is embarking upon, though she is still dressed in mourning.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1960-61, no. 736 – Paris, Orangerie, 1966, no. 55 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 18 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 14 (ill.).

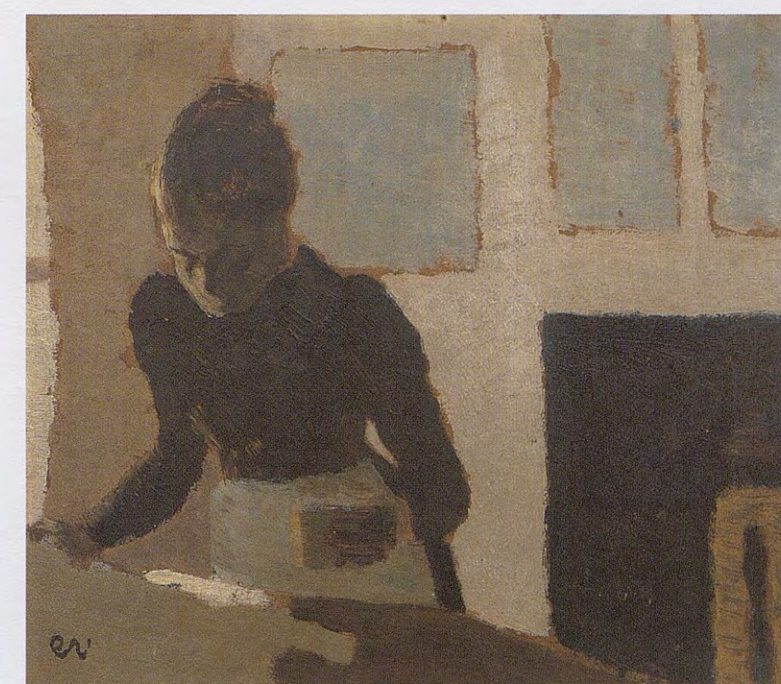
**Bibliography:** Georges 1982, pp. 42-43.

**Description:** On the left, a woman in a black blouse and green apron stands behind a brown table, holding an iron poised over a shirt with shoulder straps. Her face is given the same tonal value as the overall composition, which has brown highlights. The light filtering past a strip of white curtain and a beige wall on the left casts a greenish white hue on her jaw, nose and the side of her head. The background consists of a brown frame around light-green panes of glass and, on the right, a dark rectangle with half a chair-back outlined against it. (JS)

Stylistically, this picture is very similar to *Two Women in the Kitchen* (IV-24), *In Bed* (II-123) and *Portrait of Lugné-Poe* (III-25). The colours are milky, with a Vermeer-like light falling upon the figure; and Degas would not have turned up his nose at the motif. On the other hand, the room's impenetrable silence, made denser still by the stark geometry of the wall, is thoroughly characteristic of Vuillard.

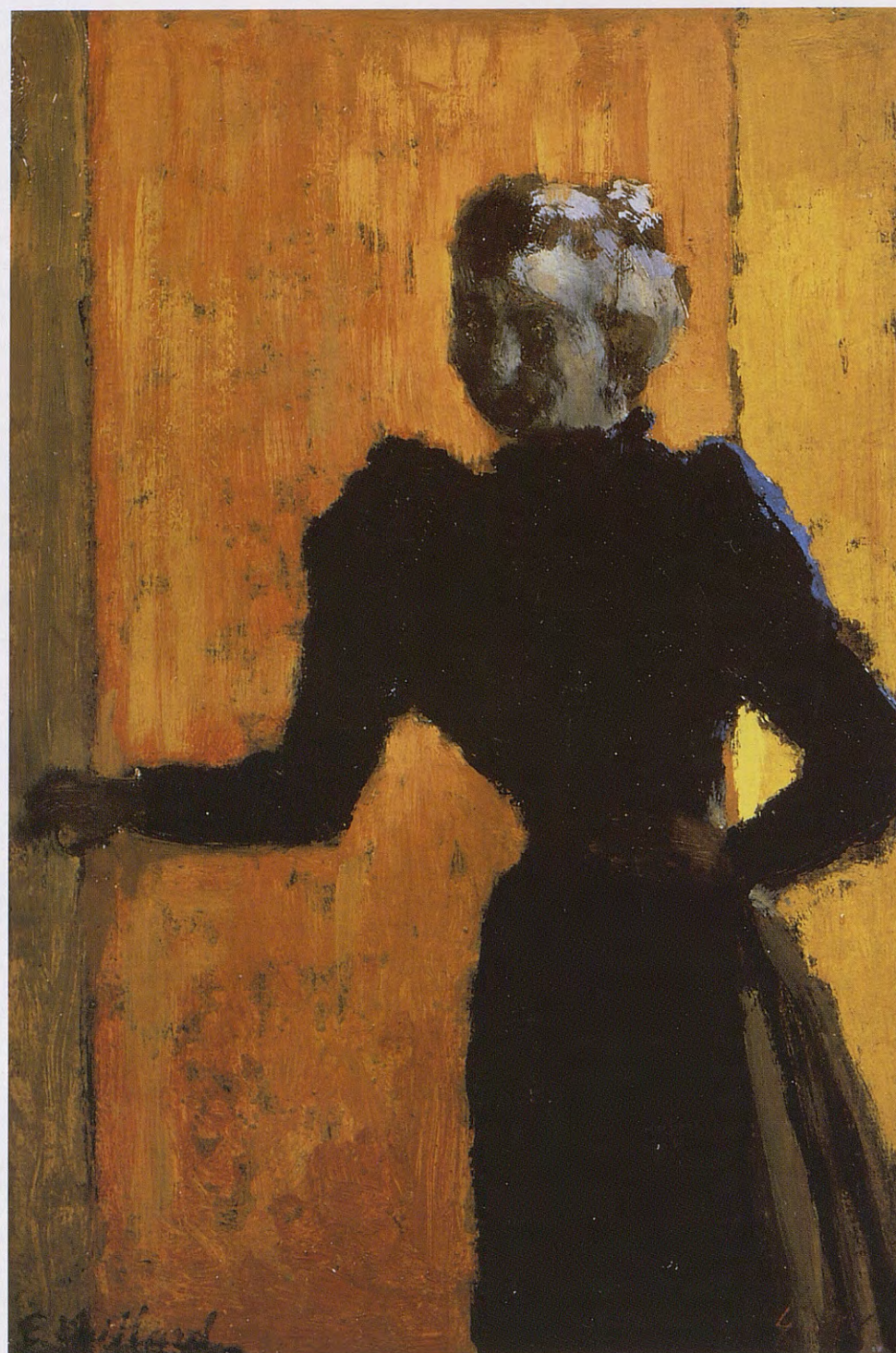


E. V., preparatory drawing taken from a study sheet, graphite on brown paper, 24.8 x 20 cm. Private collection.



IV-98





IV-99

#### IV-99 Woman in a Blue Blouse against a Yellow Background

1893  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
panel, 22.7 × 15 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Fondation Pierre Gianadda, Martigny  
(Switzerland)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris –  
Galerie Schmit, Paris, c. 1985 – Fondation Pierre  
Gianadda, Martigny.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Schmit, 1985, no. 58 (col. ill.)  
and 1987, no. 63 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes,  
1990-91, no. 36, p. 153 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris,  
1993-94, no. 161 (col. ill.) – San Francisco-Dallas-  
Bilbao, 1999-2000, no. 404, p. 261 (col. ill.) – St.  
Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 16, p. 89 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-  
Paris, 1993-94, p. 329 – Kahng, exhib. cat., San Fran-  
cisco-Dallas-Bilbao, 1999-2000, pp. 259, 260 (col.  
ill.).

Marie is presumably still in mourning here. This would seem to confirm the date of 1893 put forward for this painting in the Lyons and Paris exhibitions. As in *The Lady of Fashion* (II-135), the artist is depicting the passage from one room to another, a female form encroaching on a new space; her figure stands out boldly, like a silhouette from the Chat Noir.

#### IV-100 Lady in a Moroccan Armchair

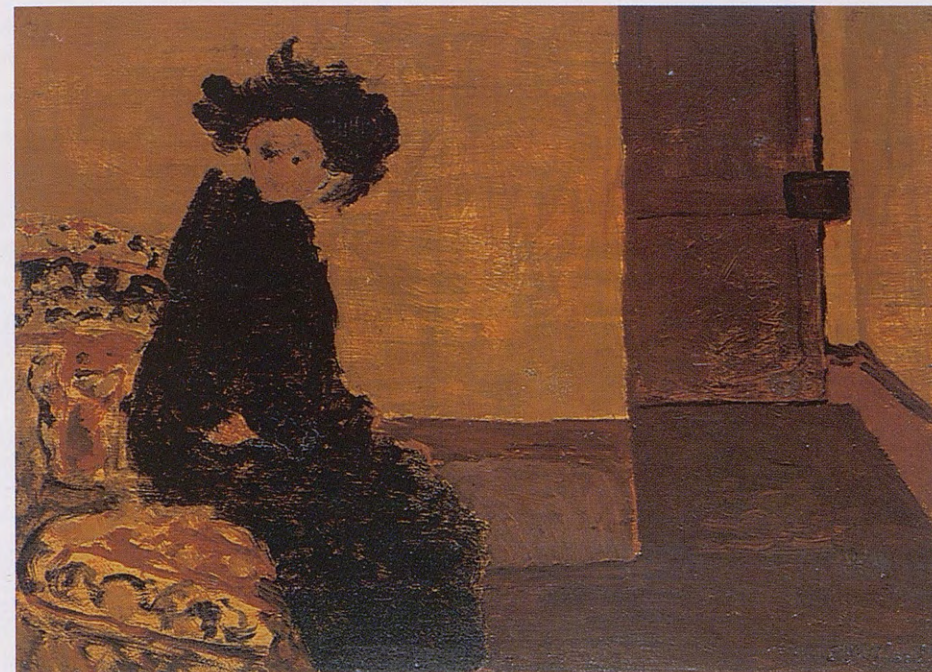
1893  
Oil on hardboard, 23.2 × 31.4 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, New York

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New  
York – Mrs Emily McFadden Staempfli, New York –  
Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 20 May 1982, lot 234  
(col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, New York,  
19 May 1983, lot 303A (col. ill.) – Gagosian  
Gallery, New York.

**Exhibitions:** New York, The Metropolitan Muse-  
um of Art, 1966, no. 205 – Philadelphia, Muse-  
um of Art, 1968.

**Description:** A room with bare, ochre-coloured walls  
and reddish-brown skirting boards; a corridor and  
brown door on the right. A woman dressed in black  
and wearing a large hat is perched on the edge of a  
chair with an Arabic pattern. She appears to be wait-  
ing for someone. (AC)

The sitter may be Marie in mourning dress, visiting her brother in his studio in the rue Pigalle, which is recognisable by the fact that the bare ochre walls are not lined with wall-paper, as they would have been in Madame Vuillard's apartment. Kerr-Xavier Roussel lived here in the spring of 1893 or thereabouts – as stated in his military records – which is precisely when the flirtation between Marie and Vuillard's future brother-in-law was at its height. Like all *ateliers d'artiste*, the studio shared by Vuillard, Bonnard and Lugné-Poe will have been decorated with various exotic objects, like this Moroccan armchair which might well have inspired some of Matisse's Nice compositions.



IV-100

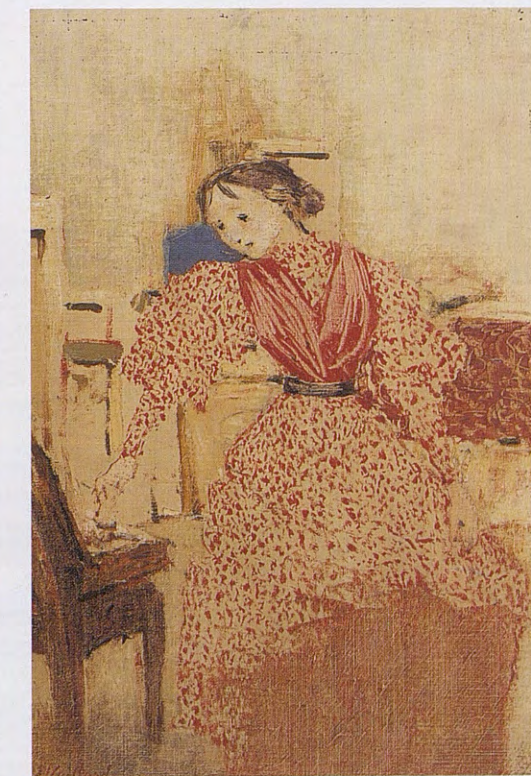
#### IV-101 Reading the Newspaper

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 27.2 × 27 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left: *ev / 93*  
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford  
(Connecticut), Philip L. Goodwin  
Collection, 1958.222

**Provenance:** Roger Marx, Paris – Roger Marx sale,  
Galerie Manzi, Joyant & Cie, 11-12 May 1914,  
lot 90 – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 20292),  
800 F – Alex Reid, Glasgow, 24 March 1919, part  
of a lot – Aitken Dott & Son, Edinburgh (Great  
Britain) – Reid & Lefevre, London, 5 August 1925  
– Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, 17 August 1925 (stock no.  
24355) – Duveen Brothers, London, 24 June 1926  
– Paul Rosenberg, New York – Philip Lippincott  
Goodwin, Syosset, Long Island (New York), 1953  
– Gift from the Philip L. Goodwin collection, by  
James L. Goodwin and Henry Sage Goodwin, to  
the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, 1958.



IV-101



IV-102

**Exhibitions:** New York, Rosenberg, Jan. 1953,  
no. 17 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 42 (ill.),  
101 – Hartford, Wadsworth, 1957, no. 34, fig. 6.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 53 – Turn-  
er 1958, p. 10 – Hartford 1959, p. 29 – Roger-  
Marx 1968, p. 30.

#### IV-102 Young Lady in Red

1893  
Oil on canvas, 39.5 × 25 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, United States

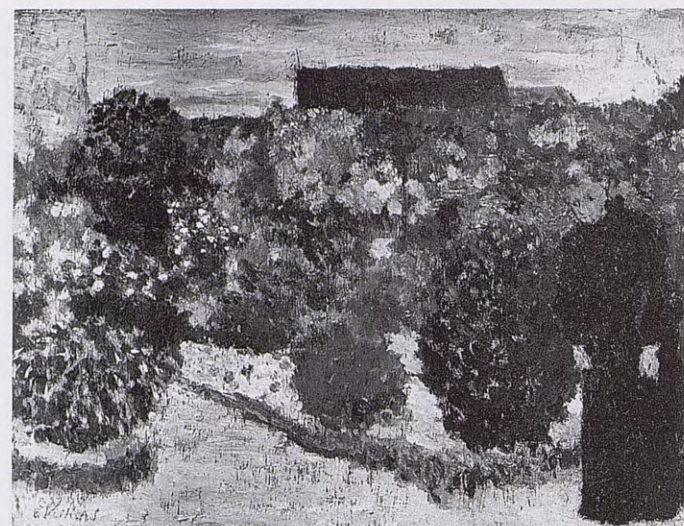
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Mrs John Hay Whit-  
ney Collection, New York – Private collection,  
United States.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 34 –  
London, Tate Gallery, 1960-61, no. 62 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 68 (ill.).

**Description:** In the artist's studio, with canvases  
stacked on the left, sits a young woman in a voile dress  
with red dots and a red shawl tucked in at her waist.  
She leans sideways towards a box of paints on a brown  
chair. Behind her, we glimpse a corner of a blue can-  
vas affixed to an easel. (AC)





IV-103

#### IV-103

### Marie in the Garden

c. 1893  
Oil on canvas, 26.5 × 34.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hector Brame, Paris, 1947 – Matthiesen, London and New York – David B. Findlay, Connecticut – Private collection, United States.

**Description:** Evening. Various dark-green and blue flowerbeds with patches of yellow, white and pink flowers. A lady in a blue dress appears on the right, holding her arms loosely in front of her. Blue sky with white clouds. One of the artist's earliest 'polyphonic' garden studies. (AC)

#### IV-104

### The Green Gate, Tante Saurel

1893  
Oil on canvas, 43 × 25 cm  
Stamp 1, upper left  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris, 1944 – Marcel Hendricks-Masurel, Paris – Galerie Schmit, Paris.

**Description:** A woman seen in profile wearing a dark-blue dress with a plait hanging down her back, in front of a yellow stone wall. She leans on a green gate. A dog lies to the right. A large grey shadow extends towards the left. (AC)



IV-104



Kerr-Xavier Roussel, *Woman in Front of a Green Gate*, c. 1891-93, oil on panel. Private collection.

Nowhere else does Vuillard come as close to the manner of his future brother-in-law, Kerr-Xavier Roussel, as in this little composition remarkable for its conciseness and

introspection. The figure of the artist's aunt withdrawn into herself, the hastily worked gate on which she leans, the sedulously depicted masonry – these are its main components. In particular, it brings to mind Roussel's *Conversation* at the Musée des Augustins in Toulouse,<sup>1</sup> his *Woman in a Blue Peignoir*<sup>2</sup> and, not least, his *Woman in front of a Green Gate* (see ill.), the gloomy abstraction of which offers more than one parallel with this image of *tante Saurel*.

<sup>1</sup> Kerr-Xavier Roussel, *Conversation*, c. 1891-93, oil on canvas, 41 × 32 cm, Musée des Augustins, Toulouse.

<sup>2</sup> Kerr-Xavier Roussel, *Woman with a Blue Peignoir*, c. 1892, oil on canvas, 35 × 27 cm, priv. coll.

#### IV-105

### The Green Posts, Tante Saurel

c. 1893  
Oil on canvas, 45.1 × 37.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.1.223

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alphonse Bellier, Paris, 1948 – Jacques Seligmann, New York – Knoedler, New York – Robert Lehman, New York – Lehman bequest to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1975.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Seligmann, 1948, no. 14 [*Le Foyer*, c. 1900] – Cincinnati, Art Museum, 1959, no. 171 (ill.) – Oklahoma City, Museum of Art, 1983, pp. 86, 87 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Mauner 1978, p. 257, fig. 135.

**Description:** In a sketchily rendered courtyard, at the back of which a flight of stairs appears to lead to an upper floor, where a black-and-brown rug is draped over the balustrade, an old woman leans on a green barrier echoed in the foreground by a second barrier with a dog at its foot. A green door in the centre left background. The scene is strange, and seems to be a repeat of the preceding composition, from a different angle. The canvas is primed with a purple that shows through in a broad band on the right as a dark wall. (AC)



IV-105





IV-106

# IV-106 Madame Vuillard Standing, Reading by a Window

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 31 × 24 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – O'Hana, London – Steven Arts, London – Edward G. Robinson, Los Angeles (California) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 3 July 1973, lot 14 (col. ill.) – David Findlay, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 7 Nov. 1979, lot 562 (col. ill.) – Mrs Eugene W. Jackson, Meadowbrook – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** London, O'Hana, 1958, no. 84 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Romand 1974, p. 91 (ill.) – Robinson 1975, pp. 42, 43 (col. ill.).

Very close in style to *Lady in Black, Seated* (IV-95), this small painting presents a rather formidable Madame Vuillard dressed in mourning, back-lit against the yellow background of the building opposite the apartment in the rue Saint-Honoré. Using a technique he had already experimented with in *Under the Lamp* (IV-78), the artist thrusts an armchair into the foreground, like a boundary stone marking the viewer's field of vision. The '1893 sketchbook' contains a rough drawing of this painting (see ill.).



# IV-107 The Letter

c. 1893  
Oil on cardboard, 21.2 × 24.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Sam Salz, New York – William Goetz, Los Ange-

E. V., sketch from the '1893' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 10.9 × 5.9 cm. Private collection.

les (California) – Goetz sale, Christie's, New York, 14 Nov. 1988, lot 3 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Carré, 1942, no. 1 [*Femme lisant une lettre*, c. 1898] – Paris, Charpentier, 1944, no. 142 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 59 (ill.) – San Francisco, Legion of Honor, 1959, no. 65 (ill.).

**Description:** *Clad in a dark dress with a black bodice, her bare arm resting upon a window bar, a woman is bowed over a sheet of paper forming a grey patch in the composition. A grey-pink courtyard appears on the left through the window opening. A sunbeam strikes the woman's forearm; another, softer highlight brightens the side of her face, while her features remain shadowy.* (AC)

# IV-108 Madame Vuillard Gazing out of a Window

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 22.9 × 22.9 cm  
Signed and dated, upper right: *ev / 93*  
and signed upper left: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, United States

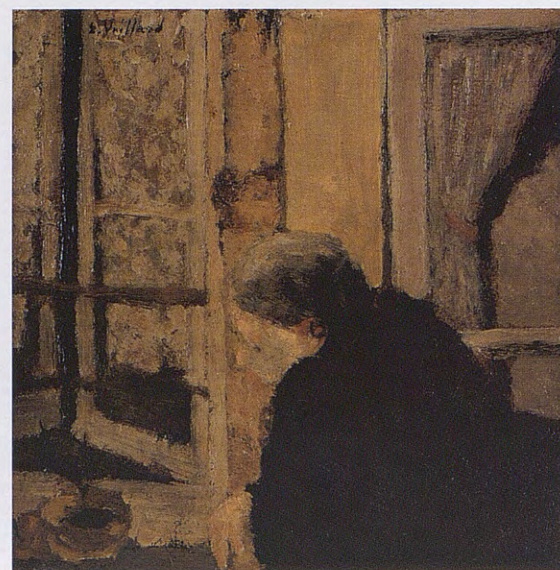
**Provenance:** Alfred Daber, Paris – Sam Salz, New York – Schoenberg Foundation, Saint Louis (Missouri) – E. V. Thaw, New York – William Kelly Simpson, New York.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Wildenstein, 1983, p. 88 – Katonah, Katonah Gallery, 1989, no. 4 (col. ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 75 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 164 (col. ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne 2000-01, no. 19, p. 91 (col. ill.).

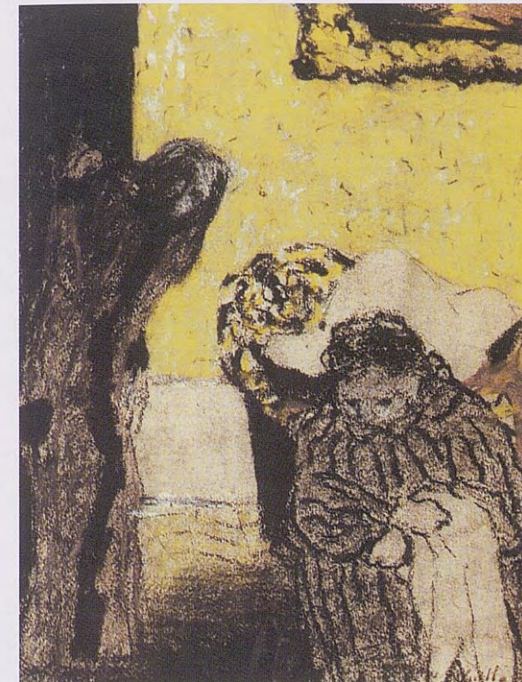
**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, p. 75.



IV-107



IV-108



IV-109

# IV-109 The Nap or Convalescence

1893  
Study for a lithograph (R-M 2)  
Pastel on cardboard, 26.5 × 20.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection, 1983.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 107 (col. ill.).



IV-110

# IV-110 The Nap or Convalescence

1893  
Study for a lithograph (R-M 2)  
Pastel on paper, 26.5 × 19.3 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*  
Art market, Bremen (Germany)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Claude Roger-Marx, Paris – Galerie Wolfgang Werner, Bremen.

**Exhibitions:** Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 243 – Berlin, Werner, 1992, no. 3 (col. ill.).



IV-111

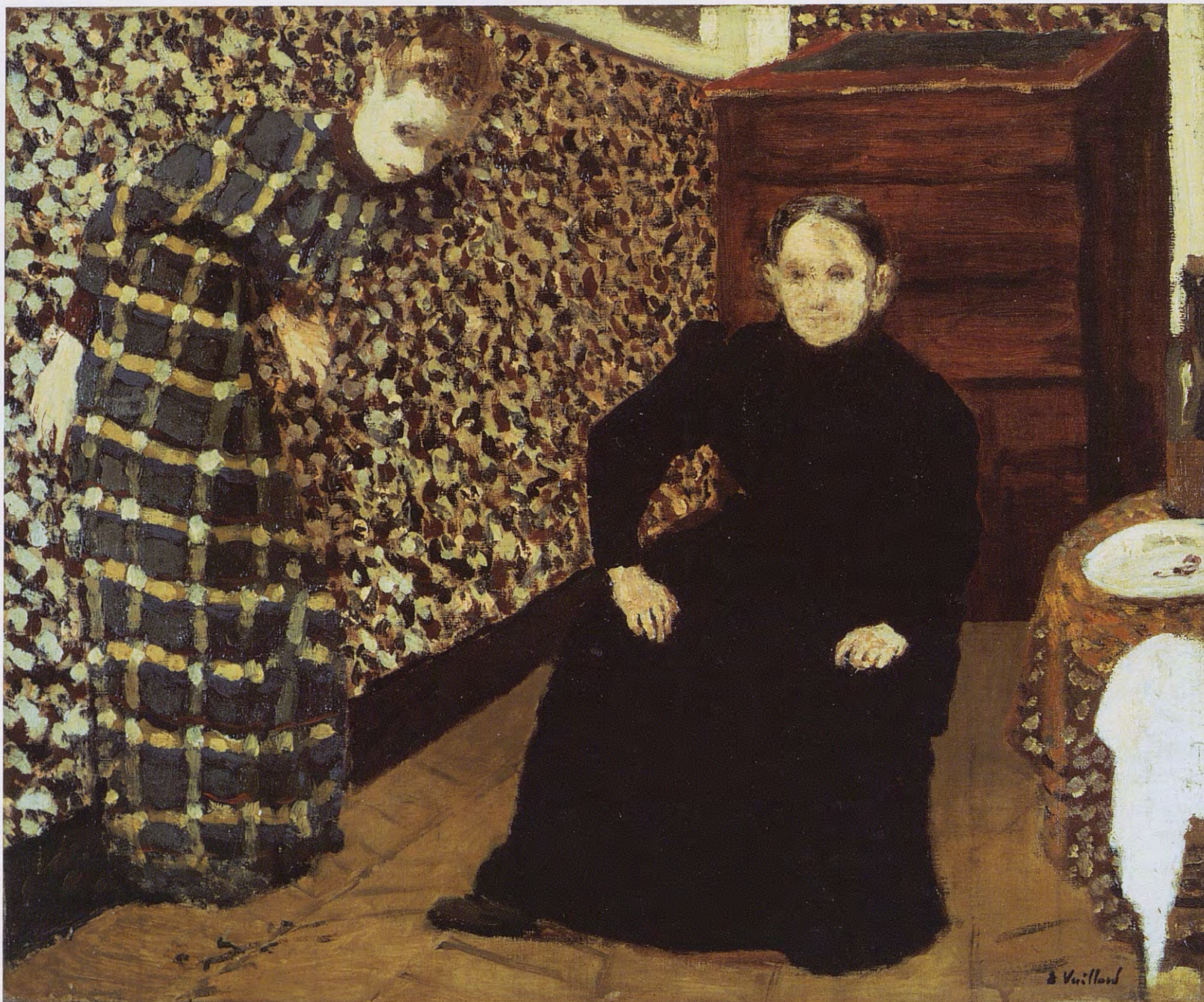
# IV-111 Marie in a Yellow Blouse

1893  
Pastel on paper, 25 × 17 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *A young woman seated in front of a dark-green background, wearing a yellow blouse with puffed sleeves and a wide skirt outlined by a green shadow. A table forms a red patch in the right background.* (JS)





IV-112

#### IV-112 Interior, the Artist's Mother and Sister

1893

Oil on canvas, 46.3 × 56.5 cm

Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*The Museum of Modern Art, New York,  
141.1934

**Provenance:** Frédéric Houbron, Paris – Houbron sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 23 March 1909, lot 182 – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 17246, *La Robe noire et la Robe verte*), 495 F –

Henry Bernstein, Paris, 19 May 1909, 800 F – Bernstein sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 8 June 1911, lot 31 – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 18843), 800 F – Max Rodrigues, Paris, 29 May 1914, 2,000 F – Max Kaganovitch, Paris – Mrs Saidie A. May, Baltimore (Maryland), 1933 – Donation to The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1934.

**Exhibitions:** Cologne, Städtische Ausstellungshalle, 1912, no. 275 – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1933 – New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1934-35, no. 151 (ill.) – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Museum of Art, 1935 – Pittsburgh, Carnegie Institute, April-May 1936, no. 43 – Washington D.C., Artist's Studio House, 1936 – Boston, Institute of Contemporary Art, 1938 – Chicago, Art Institute, 1938-39, no. 30 – New York, The Museum of Modern Art,

1939, no. 88 – Washington D.C., Phillips Memorial Gallery, 1939, no. 6 – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1944 (not in cat.) – Baltimore, Museum of Art, 1946 – New York, Seligmann, 1948, no. 6 [*The Artist's Mother and Sister*, c. 1900] – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101, p. 25 (col. ill.) – Minneapolis, Institute of Art, 1960-61 (not in cat.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1963-64 (not in cat.) – Baltimore, Museum of Art, 1968 – London, Royal Academy, 1979-80, no. 236 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1980, no. 149 (ill.) – Brooklyn, 1990, no. 55 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* 2, no. 4, Jan. 1935 – Barr 1942, no. 614 – Chastel 1946, pp. 18 (ill.), 47 – Barr 1948, no. 760 (ill.), 1950, fig. 18; and 1954, p. 38 (col. ill.) –

*Life* 37, no. 18, 1 Nov. 1954, p. 75 (col. ill.) – Dorival 1957, p. 22 – Kaganovitch 1969, p. 45 (col. ill.) – Preston 1971, pp. 78, 79 (col. ill.) – Mauner 1971-72, p. 125 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 119, 124, 130, fig. 80 – Mauner 1978, pp. 260-261, fig. 142 – Chave 1980, pp. 14-15, fig. 3 – Oakley 1981, p. 9, col. pl. 5 – Georges 1982, p. 50 – Daniel 1984, pp. 95, 142, fig. 27 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 204-209, fig. 87 – Easton 1989, pp. 74, 83-85 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 23 (ill.) – Exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, Cogeval, pp. 118, 121 (col. ill.), and Perucchi-Petri, pp. 143-144, 145 (ill.) – Forgione 1992, pp. 222-223, fig. 89 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 40, 51 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, p. 36, fig. 56 – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, pp. 332-333, fig. 165.2 – Libby 1994, p. 30 – Sidlauskas 1997, pp. 85, 86 (ill.), 87.

This interior, with its despotic, Expressionist-like geometry, is Vuillard's most skilful depiction of the polarity between mother and daughter. The perspective lines are more than ever exaggerated, and the artist presents familiar objects – the table, the walls covered with wallpaper that seems to have exploded into endlessly self-repeating patterns, the sempiternal chif-fonnier – from an utterly unfamiliar angle. At a time when his activity in the Symbolist theatre is at its peak, he applies to his vision of the family principles of stage design that exacerbate – not without a touch of humour – the already oppressive psychological relationships within the household. Conveying, as it does, a profound feeling of uneasiness, this portrayal of Vuillard's mother and sister is one of his best-known paintings. Not a word is spoken, yet everything is clear, not least with respect to the two women's repressed neuroses and the poisonous atmosphere filling this corner of the family dining room. The decor's skewed perspective seems designed to heighten the instinctive dread felt by Marie, imprisoned by her surroundings. The mother's stony fixity is deftly contrasted with the feverish anxiety of the daughter, who is seen bending down as if to fit inside the composition, while at the same time pressing against the wall, in a manner of speaking to prevent herself from being swallowed up by the vibrant motifs of the wallpaper. It has repeatedly been observed<sup>1</sup> that Madame Vuillard's posture recalls that of Monsieur Bertin in Ingres' celebrated portrait.<sup>2</sup> The



IV-113

chalky, Expressionist-like pallor of the two faces also brings to mind the lighting of Symbolist theatre. The monumental treatment of the figures contrasted with an interior that appears to shrink is one of the Nabi painter's finest inventions. To borrow a phrase from Maurice Maeterlinck, whose influence casts a long shadow over this painting, the mother and daughter form 'a certain fearful, sombre harmony' with their surroundings.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ciaffa 1985, p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Louis-François Bertin*, 1832, oil on canvas, 116 × 95 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, preface to *Théâtre*, Geneva, Slatkine, 1979, p. II.

#### IV-113 Madame Vuillard with a Pink Cup

c. 1893

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
panel, 22.5 × 22 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1942 – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – M. Lambert, Paris – Mr and Mrs Alex M. Lewyt, New York – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Brame, 1953 (not in cat.)

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1954, p. 46 (ill.).

**Description:** Her head turned towards the left, one elbow propped on a table covered with a floral cover, the artist's mother holds up a pink cup highlighted with a fine luminous line. The white of a napkin clamped under her right arm stands out sharply against her black dress. A coffee pot and the saucer for the pink cup rest on the table. The wall, its skirt-ing board rendered as a black band, is dappled with browns, greens and reds. In the background right sits a white porcelain lamp on a purple sideboard. This is the same variegated background (topped by a row of glass panes not shown, here) we find in many a study from this period, notably the following composition and Interior, the Artist's Mother and Sister [IV-112], where it is viewed from the same angle. It will later give rise to stunning variations. (AC)





IV-114

#### IV-114 Woman by an Open Door

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 28.2 x 23.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 65 [*Femme sous une porte*] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 17 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 21 – Stockholm, Galerie d'Art Latin, 1948, no. 5 [*La Porte*, 1895] – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 190 [*Intérieur, la porte*] – Paris, Berès, May 1957 (not in cat.) – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959,

no. 14 (col. ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 11 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 10 – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-64, no. 309 (col. ill.) – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 13 (ill.) – Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 56 (col. ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 38 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 16 (ill.) – Montreal-Paris, 2000-01, p. 332 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Dorival 1957, p. 22 – *Emporium* 131, no. 782, Feb. 1960, p. 53 (ill.) – Salomon 1961, p. 40 (col. ill.); 1962b, p. 33 (col. ill.); and 1968, pp. 58, 59 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 51 – Warnod 1988, p. 23.

**Description:** A pearl grey door standing wide open, and, within the doorway, the silhouette of an elderly woman holding a linen cloth. Details of chairs, a blue screen flecked with yellow, a yellow straw stool and a red cushion. (AC)

#### IV-115 Interior with Three Women Conversing

1893  
Oil on canvas, 36.2 x 58 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Andrew P. Fuller, Fort Worth (Texas), c. 1952 – Jack C. Vaughn, Dallas (Texas), c. 1963 – Marlborough Fine Art, London – Henry Moore, Much Hadham (Great Britain) – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibitions:** Dallas, Museum of Art, 1952, no. 53, and 1963 – New York, Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, 1964, no. 46 (ill.) – London, Marlborough, 1969, no. 74 (col. ill.) – Paris, Didier Imbert, 1992, p. 121 (col. ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne 2000-01, no. 21, p. 93 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946b, p. 68 (ill.) – Groom 1993, p. 34, fig. 50.

**Description:** Three young women in front of a partition covered with a variegated wallpaper. The figure on the left is seated and shown in profile, the second is clad in red, and the third is attired in a dress with white dots (produced by the cardboard support showing through). They appear to be deep in conversation. A chair with a yellow frame stands to the right. (AC)

The atmosphere of this composition is much like that of the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels*. In one of his broadest views of the family apartment, the artist here depicts the room that served as the dressmaking studio, drawing its light from the glazed upper portion of the partition. The illusion of depth is emphasized by the presence of the woman in the left foreground, and by the fact that she appears to have distanced herself from the other two, who are absorbed in the delights of trying on a new dress. In a preparatory drawing in his '1893 sketchbook' (see ill.), Vuillard sets the scene in a few deft strokes that make its meaning immediately clear: standing with her hands on her hips, the woman on the right – probably Marie – appraises the dress the other woman has just slipped on; she is the sole judge of which alterations will inevitably be required.



IV-115



E. V., sketch from the '1893' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 5.9 x 10.9 cm. Private collection.

#### IV-116 Interior, the Dressmaking Room

1893  
Oil on canvas, 33 x 40 cm  
Signed and dated, upper left: *ev / 93*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 10102), 23 Dec. 1899, 700 F – Josse Bernheim, Paris, 23 Dec. 1899, 700 F – Stephen C. Clark, New York; Jane Forbes Clark, New York – Private collection, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 9 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101 – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1955, p. 21 [*Interior at l'Étang-la-Ville*] – New Haven, Yale, 1960,

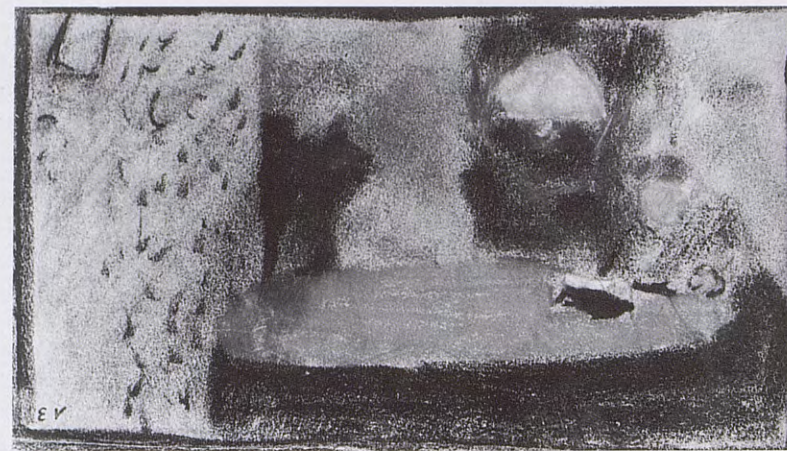
no. 64 (ill.) – New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, summer 1960, no. 130 – University Park, The Pennsylvania State University, 1968, no. 5 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 27, (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Théodore 1938, p. 126 (ill.) – Fels 1950, p. 139 (ill.) – Schweicher 1955, pl. 7 – *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* 22, no. 4, summer 1955, p. 35 (ill.) – Easton 1989, pp. 52-53.



IV-116





IV-117

#### IV-117 The Red Tablecloth

c. 1893  
Pastel on paper, 15 × 27 cm  
Stamp 4, lower left  
Art market, Munich (Germany)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Schick, Paris, 1966 – Sale, Galerie Kornfeld, Berne, 25 June 1982, lot 936 – Kunsthandel Sabine Helms, Munich.

**Description:** Green and yellow ceiling lamp; seated lady; powerful, black shadows. The whole framed with a black line – distinctly 'Vuillardian' relationships. (AC)



IV-118

#### IV-118 Kerr-Xavier Roussel at His Easel

c. 1893  
Oil on cardboard, 25 × 23.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Roussel shown in profile, legs crossed, seated on the edge of an easy chair with a beige slip cover. A tall window behind him, its brown frame enclosing a view of a grey roof against a white sky. The artist, wearing a long black coat, extends one arm towards the easel. Green floor on the left, catching the light on the right. (JS)

#### IV-119 Kerr-Xavier Roussel Reading a Newspaper

1893  
Oil on plywood, 23 × 28 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1953, no. 28 [*Kerr-Xavier lisant son journal*, c. 1905] – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 13 – Paris, L'Œil Galerie d'Art, 1963, no. 1 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 18 (ill.) – London, Lefevre, 1964, no. 1 – Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 55 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 25 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 41 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1972, no. 880 – Paris, Orsay, 1993, no. 48 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1945, p. 15 (ill.); and 1961, p. 42 (ill.) – *L'Œil*, no. 83, Nov. 1961, p. 57 (ill.) – Salomon 1968, p. 58 (col. ill.) – Preston 1971, pp. 80, 81 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, pp. 43, 163 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 222–224, fig. 97 – Warnod 1988, p. 26 (col. ill.) – Beil, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993–94, p. 308, fig. 145.1.

The treatment of space in this composition is rudimentary. We distinguish the bare walls of the artist's studio, as well as various items, including a woman's open parasol (a sign that Kerr-Xavier Roussel has been successful in love or at least that Marie is present?). Roussel wears the 'artist's garb' of a Romantic-style morning coat with a hem and 'Zouave' trousers of tussier-silk (a light Indian fabric similar to shantung), sewn by Marie and much talked about in the family: 'I seem to recall that the day Roussel wore [the trousers] for the first time, the already quite stormy weather took a turn for the worse while he was on his way, and there was such a violent down-pour that they became transparent... and pink as they clung to his thighs; upon arriving at a gathering of friends at the Ransons' home he provoked a gale of laughter...'<sup>1</sup> Absorbed in reading, Roussel seems to bask in his future brother-in-law's admiration and regard for his exceptionally broad learning. Perhaps this is Vuillard's last homage to the intellectual celibacy of his fellow Nabi artist. As Thadée Natanson observed of Roussel, 'he always had to have the latest books, novels and



IV-119



E. V., sketch from the '1893' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 5.9 x 10.9 cm. Private collection.

poems, science and philosophy, and there was not a performance or recital anywhere in the world of which he did not have at least some knowledge.'<sup>2</sup>

The '1892 sketchbook' contains a detailed preparatory drawing for this composition (see

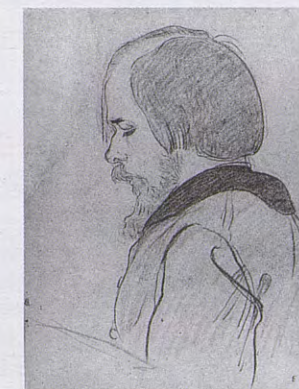
ill.). Amusingly, in his Journal entry for 27 July 1894, Vuillard informs us that Kerr suggested he wear the same trousers: 'Kerr in tussier-silk wants to convince me to wear the same. This frightens me. One of the points over which we clash.'<sup>3</sup>

A hitherto unpublished drawing from the same period (see ill.) depicts Roussel rigged out as a Romantic-era *Jeune-France* dandy, reading as usual.

<sup>1</sup> Salomon 1961, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Natanson 1948, p. 345.

<sup>3</sup> E. V., Journal, I.2, fol. 46r.



E. V., Kerr-Xavier Roussel, c. 1891, charcoal on paper, 32.5 x 24.5 cm. Private collection.





IV-120

#### IV-120 Couple by a Tree

c. 1893  
Oil on cardboard, 40 × 51.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, Geneva

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – O'Hana, London – Michael Behrens, London – David Findlay, New York – Mrs Neville Blond, London, c. 1962 – Sale, Christie's, London, 24 June 1986, lot 114 (col. ill.) – Galerie Jan Krugier, Ditesheim & Cie, Geneva.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Findlay, 1957, no. 37 (ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 52, p. 112 (col. ill.) – Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 20, p. 92 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Cogeval, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-1991, pp. 216-217.

**Description:** *The woman's ultramarine dress stands out against green foliage and a green meadow. She steps towards a man in a white shirt and brown trousers, waiting by a green tree-trunk. (AC)*

This scarcely adumbrated scene may depict Kerr-Xavier Roussel and Marie, the latter still wearing mourning; the couple appear to be flirting in a large park. Vuillard the drama-

tist presents us with a carefree idyll, combined with an enigmatic game of hide-and-seek; the



IV-121

picture clearly conjures up a scene in a play. *Pelléas et Mélisande*, we know, was staged at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord on 17 May 1893, with vaguely medieval sets that had nothing in common with the present painting; this was the very day on which Marie and Kerr-Xavier Roussel got engaged. In Maeterlinck's play, the gradual discovery of mutual passion between the two protagonists is bound up with a tragic game in which their true identities are concealed from one another. Vuillard may well be superimposing two levels of reality that are particularly meaningful for him.

#### IV-121 In *Tante Saurel's* Garden

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 30 × 34 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Paul Sampliner, New York – Current whereabouts unknown.

We recognize Marie Vuillard and Kerr-Xavier Roussel here, in the garden of Vuillard's great-aunt, though it is not clear whether it is her garden at 30 rue de la Clef, in the fifth arrondissement of Paris, or her garden at Créteil. It hardly matters which; what does strike one, however, is Marie's somewhat rigid watchfulness, as if she were on her guard. Reserved as ever, she observes her fiancé in silence, as he stoops over a flowerbed. The artist's '1893 sketchbook' contains a drawing for this painting.

#### IV-122 Marie with Her Elbow Propped on a Window Bar

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 34 × 30 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

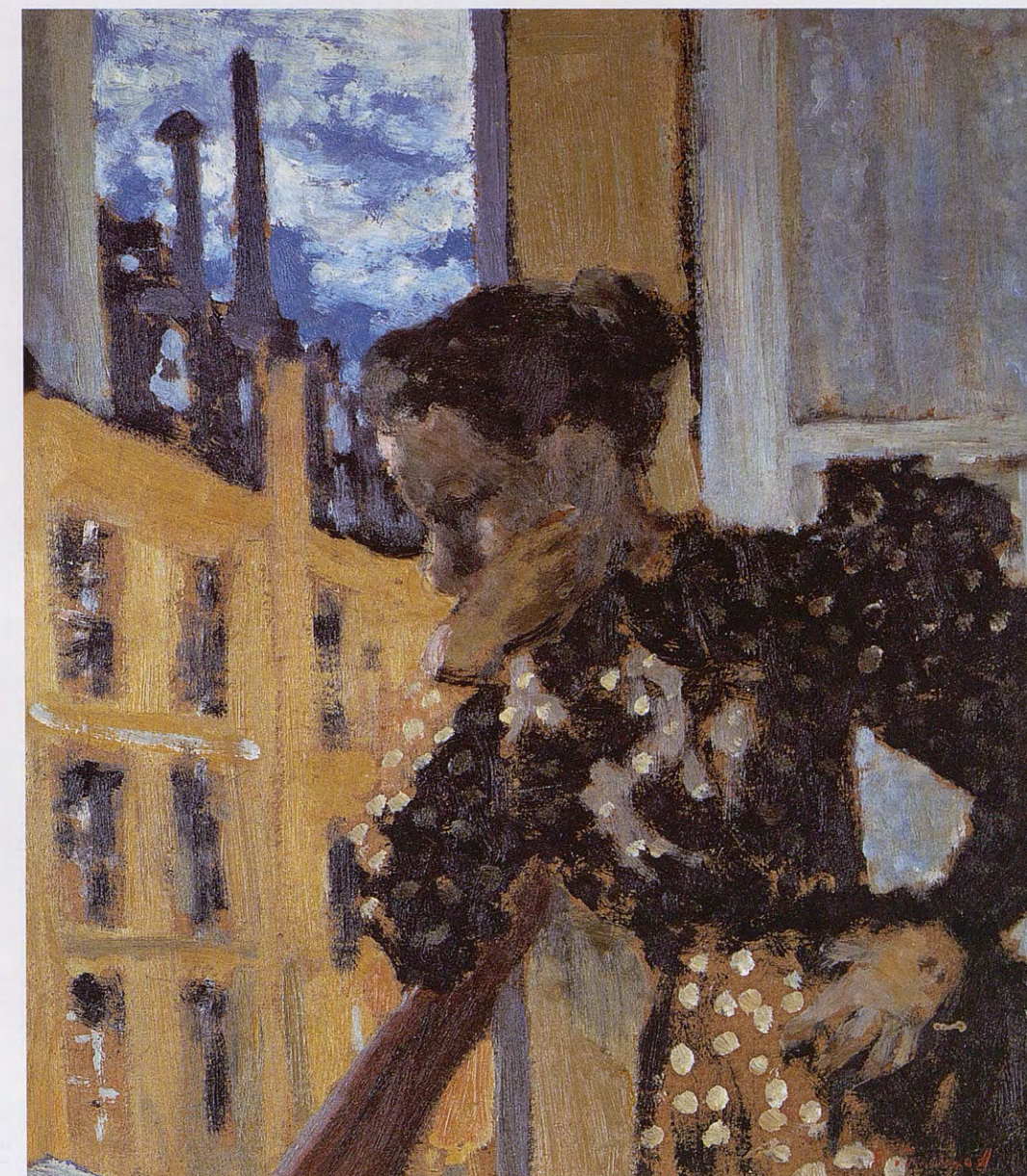
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Charles Boyer, Los Angeles (California) and Scottsdale (Arizona) – Sale, Sotheby's, Los Angeles, 23 June 1980, lot 227, bought in – Mrs Joyce Treiman, Pacific Palisades (California) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 15 Nov. 1984, lot 317 (col. ill.) – Acquavella, New York – Malcolm Wiener, New York – The Beverly Sommer Collection, New York – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 76 (col. ill.).

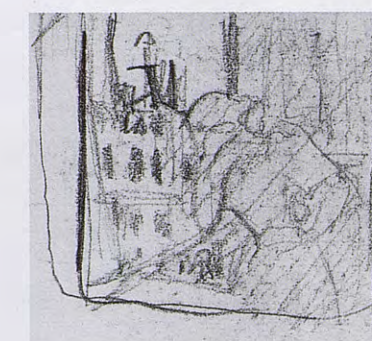
**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, p. 99 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 53 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *Shown in profile, in a black dress with grey polka-dots, in front of the bluish panes of an open window, Marie rests an elbow on the brown safety bar; her hand clasps her grey-mauve face topped by black hair. To the left, a curious beige building with black openings, beneath black factory chimneys and a cloudy blue sky. (JS)*

There is a detailed preparatory drawing for this delightful composition in the '1893 sketchbook', in which the artist sedulously records the progress of the flirtation between Marie and Kerr-Xavier Roussel (see ill.). The spatial lay-out Vuillard is experimenting



IV-122



E. V., sketch from the '1893' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 5.9 x 10.9 cm. Private collection.

with here is particularly fine and is strikingly modern for the period: within a single frame he manages to include yellow walls, a mackerel-blue sky and Marie absorbed in contemplating the busy street below. It is one of the artist's loveliest tributes to his sister's shy femininity. Would it be stretching matters to imagine that Marie is looking out for Kerr-Xavier Roussel, unwittingly performing an *intimiste*, modern variation on the Symbolist's favourite theme of the 'princess in the tower'? The painting is tiny, yet the distortions in perspective, similar to those later found in Expressionist theatre, give one to think that the composition's lines converge on a point that lies well beyond the picture frame. Hence the scene's exceptionally vibrant tension.





IV-123

**IV-123**  
**Window in Winter**

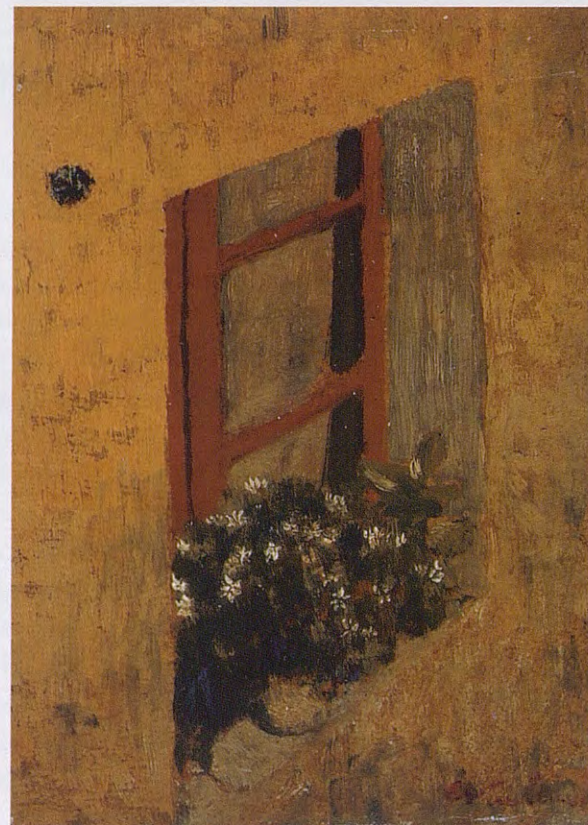
c. 1893-95  
Oil on cardboard, 15 × 27 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris, 1942 – Maurice Brianchon, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**IV-124**  
**Flowers on a Windowsill**

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 23.5 × 17.2 cm  
Stamp 2, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris, 1942 – Sale, Christie's, London, 1 Dec. 1987, lot 155 (col. ill.) – Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection.



IV-124



IV-125

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 66 – Paris, Berès, 1988; and 1990, no. 119.

**Description:** *An assortment of small blue flowers in pots on a windowsill seen obliquely from above. The window frame is brown. (JS)*

**IV-125**  
**A Broom in the Courtyard**  
**at 346 Rue Saint-Honoré**

1895  
Oil on cardboard, 22 × 21 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection, Denmark

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Odette Siegel, Copenhagen, c. 1987 – Private collection, Denmark.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Parvillée, 1943, no. 75 [*Le Balai*] – London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 117 – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 198.

**Description:** *A woman seated on the left, viewed from above in a corner of a grey interior courtyard. A straw broom decorated with a slender, multi-coloured ribbon leans against a yellowish wall with a broad black band running along its base. (AC)*

**IV-126**  
**Open Umbrella**  
**in the Courtyard**  
**at 342 Rue Saint-Honoré**

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 28 × 14 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Germany

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Georges Schick, Paris – Kunsthandel Sabine Helms, Munich (Germany) – Private collection, Germany.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 160 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 194 [*Le Parapluie* or *Les Provisions*, 1897] – Bremen, Werner, 1973 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Dorival 1957, p. 22.



IV-126



IV-127

**IV-127**  
**The Cat on the Step**

1898  
Oil on cardboard, 18.8 × 17.2 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Hector Brame, Paris – Galerie Bela Hein, Paris – Knoedler, New York – Mrs Gerrish Milliken, New York, 1952 – Stroud Collection, New York – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 102 [*Black Cat in Courtyard*, c. 1895].

**Description:** *A black cat seen from an unusual angle, crouching on a yellow step in a grey, flagged courtyard. The grey awning, jutting out above it, hides all but the lower part of the door and the mottled yellow doormat. (AC)*





IV-128

# **IV-128** **In Front of the Concierge's Lodge**

1898  
Pastel on paper, 35.6 × 25.4 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Sale, Christie's, London, 2 Dec. 1986, lot 172 (col. ill.) – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 90 – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 33, p. 23 (ill.).

**Description:** Viewed from above, a woman in a toque and large black coat, whose hem she lifts, is seen talking in a courtyard to a figure likewise clad in black, whom we glimpse through an open door standing in her red-and-white tiled kitchen. Dark grey lean-to roof; yellowish brown woodwork framing the window's red curtains. Grey pavement of the



IV-129

courtyard; a black skirting board angling off towards a drainpipe on the right. (JS)

## **IV-129** **The Shutter**

1898  
Oil on cardboard, 25 × 27 cm  
Private collection, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Captain Richard A. Peto, Isle of Wight (Great Britain), 1947 – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London, 1948 – John Barrow, Great Britain, 1948 – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Private collection, London.

**Exhibition:** Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 63 (ill.).

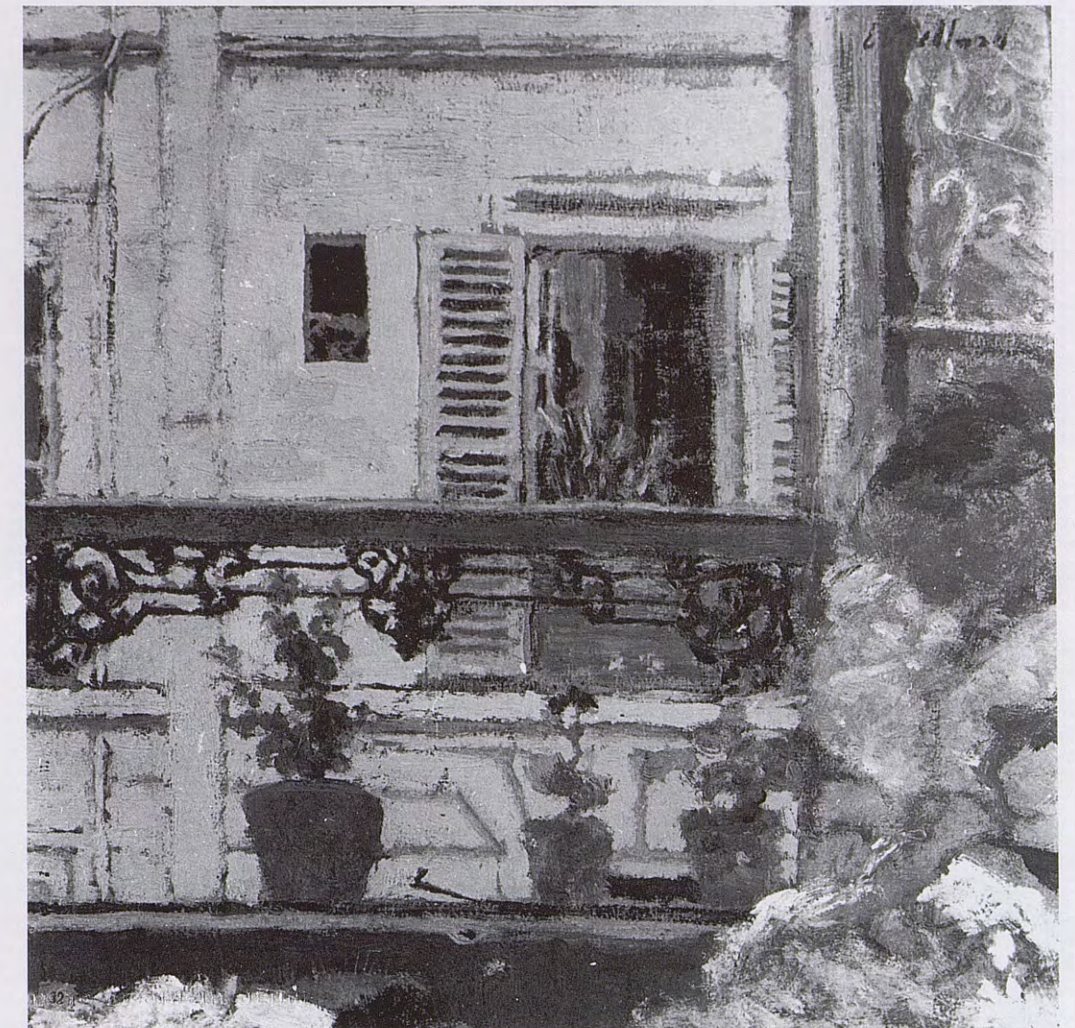
**Description:** Seen from the outside, squarely in the middle of an open window on the left, stands a young woman of unusual size, flanked by a shutter and the stones of the wall on the right. An indistinct form partly masks the light-coloured window frame in the lower left corner. (JS)

## **IV-130** **Open Window with Three Flowerpots**

1898  
Oil on cardboard, 29 × 29 cm  
Signed, upper right: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Josse Bernheim, Paris, c. 1938 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1899 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 65 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 64.



IV-130

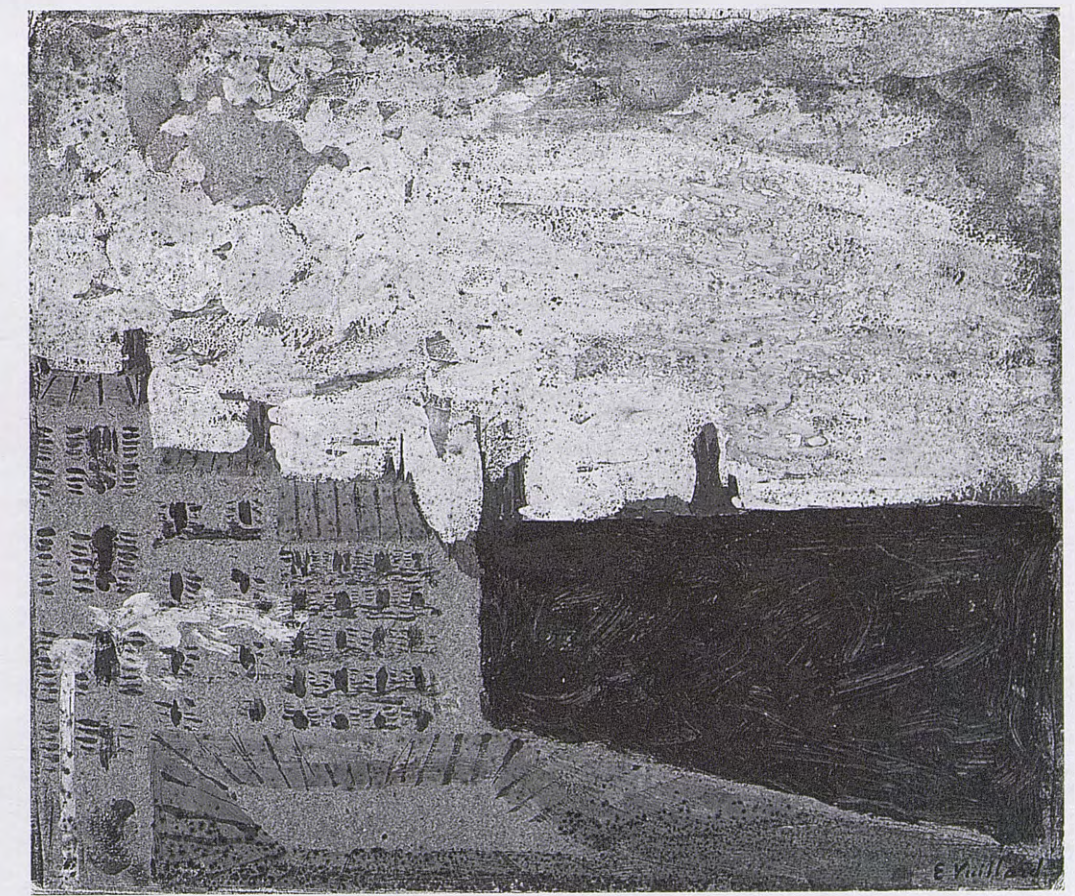
## **IV-131** **Paris Morning**

c. 1898  
Glue-based distemper on cardboard, 25.5 × 30.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris – Galerie Rosengart, Lucerne (Switzerland) – Robert F. Woolworth, New York – Sale, Christie's, London, 27 Nov. 1964, lot 36 (ill.) – The Mayor Gallery, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 21 April 1971, lot 45 (ill.) – Mrs M. A. Willis – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 5 Dec. 1973, lot 164 (ill.) – Private collection, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne – Galerie Bellier, Paris – Sale, Galerie Kornfeld, Berne, 25 June 1993, lot 149 (ill.) – Sotheby's sale London, 25 October 2000, lot 18 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

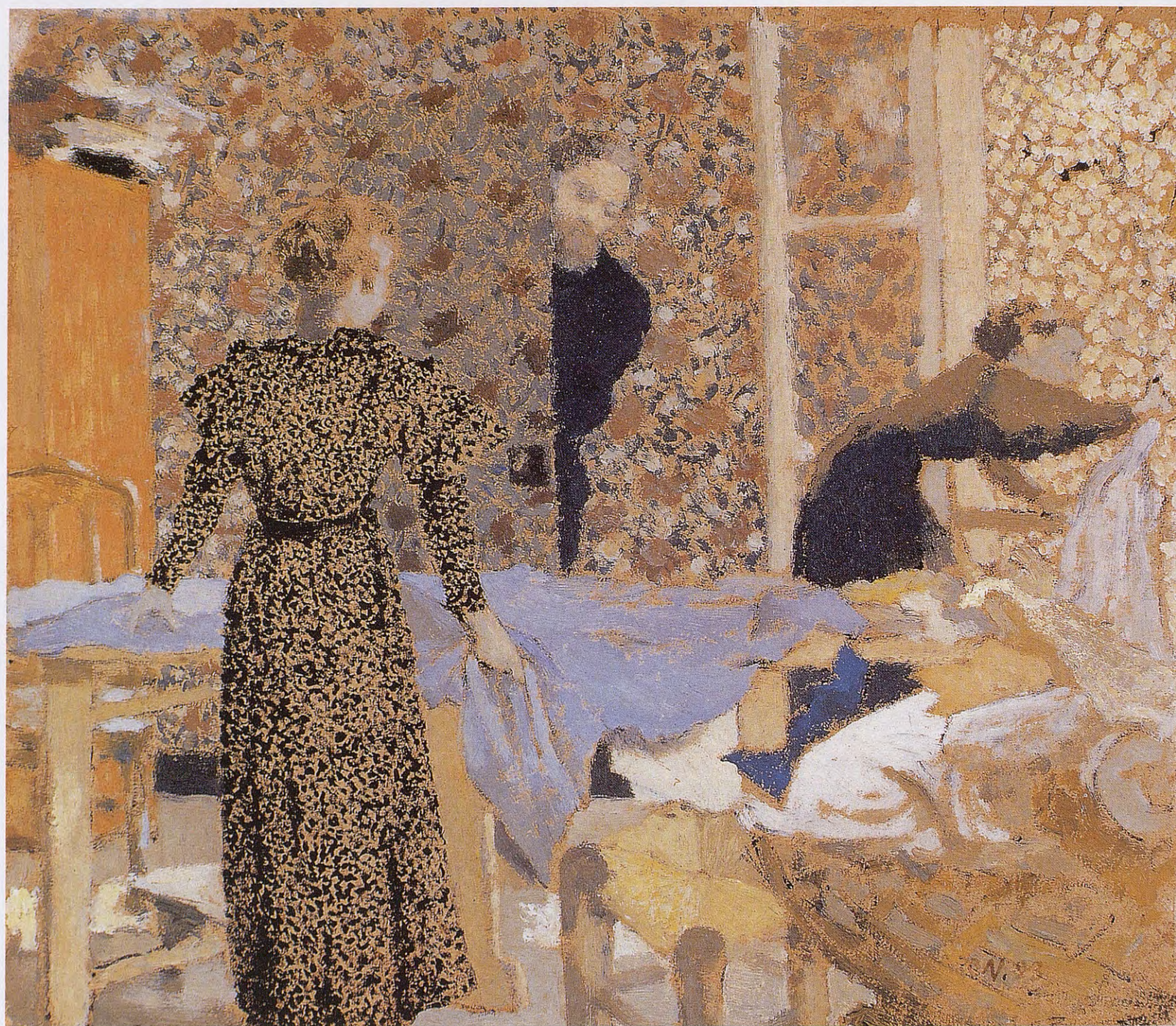
**Exhibitions:** Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 24 – Lausanne, Vallotton, 1979, no. 125 (col. ill.); and 1979-80, no. 42.

**Description:** Under a grey dawn sky, a large, dark wall on the right forms a monochrome mass with the grey skylight in the foreground and the roofs of the houses on the left; the effect is enhanced by the cardboard showing through in the left-hand corner. (AC)



IV-131





IV-132

#### IV-132 The Suitor or Interior with Work-Table

1893

Oil on cardboard, 31.7 x 36.4 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right: *ev. 93*  
Smith College Museum of Art,  
Northampton (Massachusetts),  
purchased with the Drayton Hillyer  
Fund, SC 1938:15

**Provenance:** Bernheim-Jeune, Paris – Devolved to Josse Bernheim, Paris, in the Bernheim-Jeune estate, Paris, 1932 – Jacques Seligmann, New York – Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, 1938.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, Oct.-Nov. 1893, no. 6 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1930, no. 94 – Paris, Druet, 1930, no. 94 – London, Tooth & Sons, 1934, no. 35 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 12 – Chicago, Art Institute, 1938-39, no. 26, (ill., *Interior, Étang-la-Ville*) – Washington D.C., Phillips Memorial Gallery, 1939, no. 4 – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1944, p. 224 (ill.) – Andover, Addison Gallery, 1945, no. 27 (ill.) – Providence, Museum of Art, 1949, no. 25 (ill.) – London, Tate Gallery, 1952, no. 94 – Paris, Musée

National d'Art Moderne, 1952, no. 111 – New York, Knoedler, 1953, no. 31 – Boston, Institute of Contemporary Art, 1954, no. 27 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 48 (ill., *Interior at L'Étang la Ville*), 101 – Pittsburgh, Carnegie, 1954, no. 85 (ill.) – Chicago, Arts Club, 1961, no. 25 (ill.) – Minneapolis, Institute of Arts, 1962, p. 149 – Trenton, State Museum, 1967, no. 109 (col. ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 20 (ill.), col. ill. on cover – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 39 (ill.), col. ill. on cover [*L'Atelier*] – Minneapolis, Institute of Arts, 1969, no. 86 (ill.) – Waterville-Manchester, 1969, p. VII, no. 26 (ill.) – United States, travelling exhib., 1970-72, no. 57 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 28 (col. ill.) – Paris, Orsay, 1993, no. 49 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 162, p. 45 (col. ill. 19).

**Bibliography:** Basler and Kunstler 1929, pl. 58 – Roger-Marx 1932, p. 240 (ill.) – Rich 1938b, p. 7 (ill.) – Abbott 1939a, p. 7; and 1939b, pp. 23-24, fig. 12 – *Smith Alumnae Quarterly* 31, Nov. 1939, p. 27 (ill.) – Cheney 1941, p. 351 (ill.) – Northampton 1941, pp. 7, 26 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 33 (ill.), 52; and 1948c, pl. 16 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 30-35, 46, 91, 104-105 – Northampton 1953, pp. IV, VII, XXIV-XXV, no. 33 (ill.) – *Art Digest* 28, April 1953, p. 14 (ill.) – Ritchie 1954, p. 16 – *Art Digest* 28, Feb. 1954, pp. 6-8, fig. 2 – Salomon 1961, p. 40 (ill., *Le Prétendant*) – *L'Œil*, no. 83, Nov. 1961, pp. 54-55 (ill.) – Bacou 1964, p. 193 – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 26 – Salomon 1968, p. 68 (col. ill.) – *Plaisir de France*, no. 359, Sept. 1968, p. 62 (ill.) – Chetham 1969, pp. 772 (ill.), 774 – Preston 1971, pp. 76, 77 (ill.) – Russell 1974, pl. 5 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 106, 110, 112, col. pl. 65 – *Paris Match*, 1976, p. 124 (col. ill.) – Oakley 1981, pp. 9, 14 (col. pl. 4) – Georges 1982, pp. 44, 69, 155 – Daniel 1984, pp. 50-52, fig. 9 – Rosenblum and Janson 1984, pp. 451-452, col. pl. 81 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 224-226, fig. 98 – Thomson 1988, pp. 36, 84, col. pl. 49 – Warnod 1988, pp. 23, 30 (col. ill.) – Easton 1989, pp. 48-50, 52-53, 65, 68-69 – Makarius 1989, pp. 17 (col. ill.), 21 – Rishel, travelling exhib. cat., United States, 1989-91, p. 112 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, pp. 77, 80-81 (col. ill.) – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 24 (ill.) – Exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, Brachlianoff, p. 173, Cogeval, p. 126 (ill.), and Perucchi-Petri, pp. 151, 152 (col. ill.), 154 – Forgione 1992, pp. 41, 42, 101, 102, 213, fig. 23 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 46-47 (col. ill.) – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 47 (col. ill. 19) – Libby 1994, p. 27 (ill. 1) – Sidlauskas 1997, fig. 23.

A preparatory drawing from the Salomon archives (see ill.), first shown at the *Le Temps des Nabis* exhibition<sup>1</sup> in Montreal, has made it possible to establish a link between this painting and the following one. Though presented under the title *The Studio* in most exhibitions, *The Suitor* has long been associated, following Jacques Salomon,<sup>2</sup> with Kerr-Xavier Roussel's courtship of Vuillard's sister; hence the more appropriate title, *The Suitor*.



E. V., preparatory sketch for *The Suitor* and *Interior with a Red Bed*, charcoal on paper, 33 x 21.2 cm. Private collection.

The painting, moreover, is dated 1893. Art historians, on the other hand, have unanimously dated the second composition, *Interior with a Red Bed* (IV-133),<sup>3</sup> to around 1895, so it never occurred to anyone that the two scenes might be related. In the preparatory drawing the dimensions of the two paintings are very different, suggesting that Vuillard initially conceived the *Interior with a Red Bed* as a kind of 'predella' for what was to have been the major composition or 'pala' – namely, *The Suitor*. The finished canvases, on the other hand, are of roughly the same height (though the overall format of *Interior with a Red Bed* is closer to that of the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels*). The diptych formed by the two works can thus be regarded as the Nabi bachelor's epithalamium, so to speak.

*The Suitor* is one of Vuillard's most famous paintings, and rightly so. It seems to concentrate the essence of his art, which had reached maturity long before he embarked on his large-scale decorative ensembles (*Public Gardens*, 1894, and the *Natanson Panels*, 1895). Technical virtuosity, complexity, wit, cunning and a penchant for slipping clever quotations into the composition, are all present here. The subject is related to the artist's family life. In the course of 1892, Kerr-Xavier Roussel had distinguished himself with his reckless amorous escapades, which had ended with the two friends being obliged to leave precipitously for Belgium and Holland that autumn. Vuillard, it would appear, had then manoeuvred to interest his best friend in his sister, Marie, in the hope that he would become his brother-in-law. Matters seem to have progressed rapidly and, on 20 July 1893, the couple were married at the town hall of the first arrondissement of Paris. Vuillard was evidently the only one in his family not to be alarmed by the difference in character between the bride and the groom: Kerr-Xavier Roussel was an intellectual Don Juan with stunning good looks, an anarchistic dandy who had chalked up innumerable conquests; Marie, on the other hand, was reserved, shy, seven years older than her husband and quite aware of the fact that she was not particularly pretty. The Vuillard clan did not look with much favour upon the marriage between the oddly matched couple, particularly after

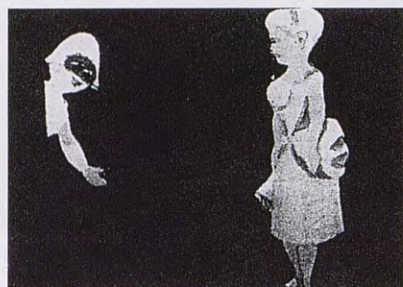
having witnessed at first hand the vicissitudes of the 'Caroline affair', in which Roussel had conducted himself discredibly. In a letter dated 8 June 1893, Alexandre Vuillard had written to his brother: 'and to come back to our lovers, your news does not surprise me, as, from the general tone of your letters to us all, the impartial observer that I am has been expecting something of this sort for the last three months at least, and my personal observations during my stay in Paris merely confirmed this feeling, which I kept to myself because I thought the difference in age and fortune a great problem. They will probably have some very lean times together, but since they appear to be fond of one another, they'll be happy all the same.'<sup>4</sup> Alexandre Vuillard's misgivings about the marriage were well founded, to say the least.

In the meantime, Vuillard seized the opportunity to make a real brother out of his best friend. Moreover, he was now able to appropriate an intimate subject for his art that would enable him to celebrate the family circle and turn it into a public spectacle. His sister's marriage provided him with an occasion to paint an *Engagement Trilogy* far more elaborate than the small-scale, Expressionist-like dramas opposing mother and daughter which abounded in his production between 1891 and 1892. When Marie and Roussel's relationship subsequently began to come apart, Vuillard would be there to give his dramatic renditions of evenings when the tension between the couple was almost palpable and the hopelessness of the situation overwhelming (see *Family Evening*, IV-211, and *Married Life*, IV-217). Yet even then, his tremendous tact – though increasingly devoid of humility – would lead him to give anonymous titles such as *Interior with a Red Bed* (reminiscent of Whistler's harmonies in grey and *Symphony in White*) to what, for the time being, were his most openly autobiographical works.

One is struck chiefly by the droll attitude of Roussel's silhouette in *The Suitor*, slipping sideways through a door covered with wallpaper. Much has been written about the late-nineteenth-century vogue for shadow theatre and Vuillard's fondness for puppet shows – Roussel looms up like a Guignol from behind a curtain – but a more unexpected influence on



this particular composition would seem to be the 'Pantomimes Optiques' of Emile Reynaud, inventor of the praxinoscope.<sup>5</sup> In October 1892, the artistic and intellectual elite of Paris flocked in droves to the Musée Grévin, where Reynaud was demonstrating his 'Cabinet Fantastique', an invention which predates by some three years that of the cinematograph. The most popular of the painted cartoons his device projected onto a screen – which included *Un bon bock* and *Clown et ses chiens* – was



*Pauvre Pierrot*, study for a pantomime lumineuse by Émile Reynaud, 1892.

the pantomime of *Pauvre Pierrot*, recounting the tale of Colombine courted by Harlequin and the forever-duped Pierrot. Now Vuillard, we know, had a special predilection for the theme of 'Pierrot, the victim of love', as evinced by the group of works he made in

connection with *The Prodigal Son* (III–34). And one of the images projected from the hand-painted cartoon strip of *Pauvre Pierrot* – the forerunner of individual film frames – shows Harlequin popping out of a crack in the dark background to court a Colombine rigid with surprise (see ill.). ('Harlequin suddenly appears; astonishment of Colombine; Harlequin removes his mask; declaration of love; Harlequin takes Colombine into his arms...').<sup>6</sup> Its similarity to *The Suitor* is quite patent, and it shows how responsive Vuillard was to the wide variety of spectacles he encountered in the course of his nocturnal perambulations. Indeed, the naïve aesthetic of the images projected by the praxinoscope, their figures standing out sharply against a black background, accorded well with the Nabis' Synthetist techniques. (To give but one example: in 1896 Félix Vallotton produced forty paintings on glass for a magic lantern for Madame Desmarais.<sup>7</sup>) By 1893, the 'Zouave Nabi' had begun to master a style in which wallpaper, fabrics and arabesques scramble the composition's legibility and camouflage figures in a kind of undulating, shimmering chromaticism. When interpreting *The Suitor*, one has to stand back for a moment

to grasp fully all the implications of this remarkable painting. Vuillard, needless to say, was to push his experiments in this vein a great deal further.



Utagawa Kunisada, Left Panel of a Triptych called *Dokusha asobi* ('Entertainment for the Public'), print. Private collection.

*The Bridal Chamber* – or rather, *Interior with a Red Bed*, as it has come to be known – shows us Marie happily preparing the room in which she and Roussel are about to celebrate their wedding-night. Vuillard alternates versicoloured surfaces – the carpet on the floor, the wallpaper, the boudoir chair – and plain ones – the white door, the screen and the bed. Marie stands out against the screen like one of the geishas in Kunisada's famous triptych, of which Vuillard owned a print (see ill.). Her attitude also brings to mind the bearers of offerings in



IV-133

ancient Roman painting; its symbolic overtones transcend what might otherwise have been merely a pose, suspending her gesture in a moment of pure grace. Vuillard lived his experiences by proxy; he longed for his sister to become a mother, though he himself wanted no children of his own and shunned marriage. If the two paintings do indeed constitute a diptych, the first may be considered a light-hearted composition to which the second forms the elegiac counterpart.

<sup>1</sup> Cogeval, exhib. cat., Montreal, 1998, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Salomon 1961, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> See exhib. cat., Lyons, 1990.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Alexandre Vuillard to E. V., 8 June 1893, Salomon archives.

<sup>5</sup> An optical toy creating the illusion of motion by reflecting a sequence of pictures in a rotating box.

<sup>6</sup> Screen titles of the pantomime *Pauvre Pierrot*, Emile Reynaud cat., Paris, Cinémathèque Française, 1945, p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> I am grateful to Marina Ducrey for this fact. Vallotton's images were projected onto a wall in Madame Desmarais' home in Mach 1897. They illustrated a yarn concocted by Alfred Athis, based on Hans Christian Andersen's 'Garden of Paradise', which was put into verse by Romain Coolus and recited by Marthe Mellot.

#### IV-133

### Interior with a Red Bed or The Bridal Chamber

1893

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 32.5 × 53 cm

Signed twice, lower right: *ev* and *Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Bernheim-Jeune, Paris – Devolved to Gaston Bernheim de Villers, Paris, in the Bernheim-Jeune estate, Paris, 1932 – Jacques Seligmann, New York – Jerome Hill, United States and France – Hill sale, Christie's, London, 2 Dec. 1974, lot 5 – Stephen Hahn, New York, with David Findlay, New York, E. V. Thaw, New York and others – Private collection, California, 1977 – David Findlay, New York, 1982 – Jay Pritzker, Chicago (Illinois), c. 1983 – Josefowitz collection – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, Oct.–Nov. 1893, no. 7 – Paris, Petit, 1932, no. 149 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 3 – Glens Falls 1943, no. 22 – Houston-Washington D.C.–Brooklyn, 1989–90, no. 34 (col. ill.) – Lyons, 1990, no. 58 [*Trois femmes dans un intérieur au papier peint rose*], pp. 12–13 (col. ill.) – Montreal, 1998, no. 176, p. 45 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Fontainas and Vauxcelles 1922, pp. 244–245, 246 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1932, pp. 240–241 (ill.) – Chastel 1954, p. 43 (ill.) – Eas-



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ton 1989, pp. 53–54 – Makarius 1989, pp. 66–67 (col. ill.), 68 – Thomson, exhib. cat., London-Paris, 1991–92, p. 537 (ill.) – Boyle-Turner 1993, p. 74–75 (col. ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 66–67 (col. ill.) – Ellridge 1993, p. 99 (col. ill.) – Cogeval, exhib. cat., Montreal, 1998, pp. 45 (col. ill.), 119.

(For commentary, see IV-132, *The Suitor* or *Interior with Work-Table*.)

#### IV-134

### A Little Chat or The Bride

1893

Oil on canvas, 32.4 × 41.3 cm

Stamp 2, lower right

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (Great Britain), GMA 2934

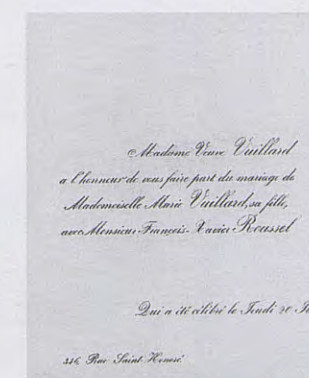
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Marcel Hendricks-Masurel, Paris – A. de Lampe – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Sir Alexander Maitland, Great Britain, 1950 – Maitland gift to the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, in memory of his wife, Rosalind, in 1960; transferred to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, 1984.

**Exhibitions:** Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, 1963, p. 46 (col. ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.–Brooklyn, 1989–90, no. 57 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Edinburgh 1965, p. 129, fig. B – Thompson and Brigstocke 1970, p. 113, no. 2229

– Mauner 1978, p. 260 – Thomson 1988, col. pl. 67 – Easton 1989, pp. 83–84 – Makarius 1989, pp. 20 (col. ill.), 21 – Forgione 1992, pp. 24, 72, 89, 93, 97, 118, 146, fig. 24 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 50–51, col. ill.

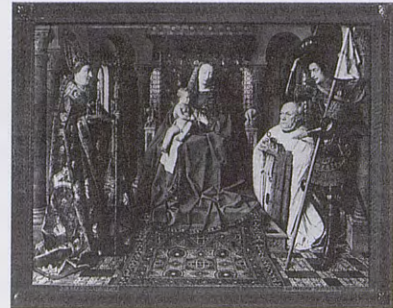
**Description:** Madame Vuillard in a black housecoat with pink stripes, seated in the centre of the composition, facing the viewer, her back to a bed with a dark-red coverlet against which an object stands out as a blue patch on the left. To the right, Madame Roussel in profile, the elegant, refined silhouette of a seated young woman wearing a high-necked dress of an icy white hue. A white-and-blue flowerpot containing a green plant on a dark sienna-coloured piece of furniture resembling a piano. Beige and grey ceiling, brown wall; green rug in the left foreground. (JS)



Announcement card for Marie Vuillard and François-Xavier Roussel's wedding, 20 July 1893.



Madame Vuillard *mère* here deviates slightly from the conventions of mourning by wearing a black dress with thin pink stripes. An ancient maternal divinity comfortably settled in the same large 'anthropomorphic' armchair we previously encountered in *Woman Darning* (IV-16), Madame Vuillard beams with happiness. Her daughter is about to be married. Thursday, 20 July 1893 (see ill.), the day of Marie and Kerr-Xavier Roussel's wedding, is presumably the date of this scene. We easily imagine, perhaps a touch comically, the



Jan Van Eyck, *The Virgin with Canon Van der Paele*, 1436, oak panel. Groeningemuseum, Bruges.

tenor of the mother's last minute counsels to her daughter on this special day. In marked contrast to the immovable Madame Vuillard, whose posture recalls that of a Van Eyck Virgin (see ill.), Marie, attired in her white wedding dress, is yet again depicted in an unstable position, sitting on the edge of a stool and fac-

ing into the room, her faltering gaze almost sunk in shadows, as if her anxious nature could already glimpse the problems that marriage was to bring her.

#### IV-135

### Marie Looking under the Bed

c. 1893

Oil on paper, mounted on canvas, 26 × 35.9 cm

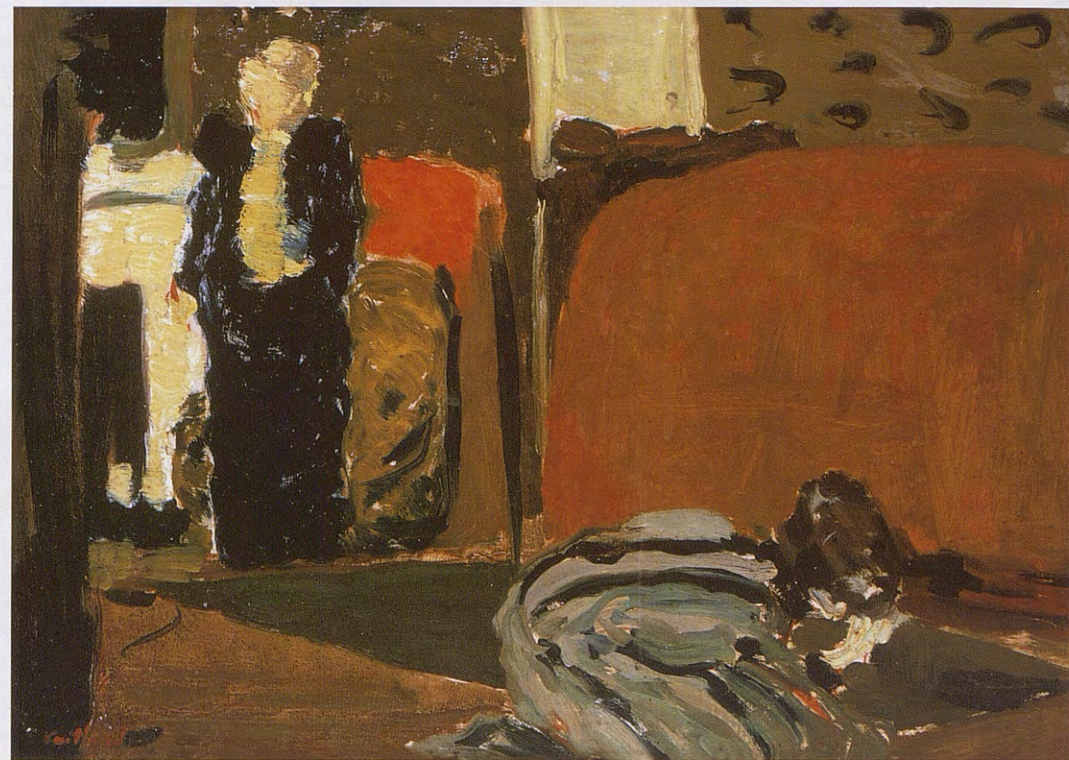
Stamp 1, lower left

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Reid & Lefevre, London – Sold on 21 Feb. 1957 to Stephen Hahn, New York – Adolphe A. Juviler, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 25 Oct. 1961, lot 18 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 3 May 1974, lot 363 (ill.) – James Goodman, New York and James Kirkman, London – Donald Purdy, Connecticut – Hammer, New York – Knoedler, New York – Sale, Christie's, New York, 3 Nov. 1982, lot 42 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Christie's, London, 2 Dec. 1985, lot 16 (col. ill.) – JPL Fine Arts, London and Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** London, Lefevre, Feb. 1954, no. 25 (ill.) – London, JPL, 1986-87, no. 54 (col. ill.) – Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 7 (col. ill.).

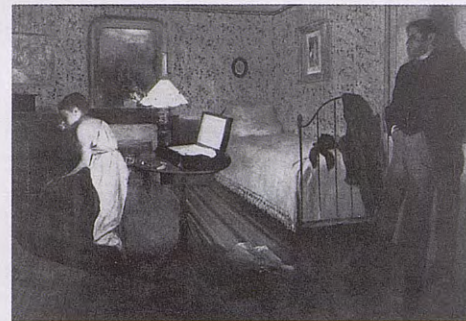
**Bibliography:** Ellridge 1993, p. 101 (col. ill.).



IV-135

**Description:** On the left, a figure clad in midnight blue standing by a white chimney piece against a reddish-brown background wall. He is gazing down at a woman in grey, crouched on the green rug to the right, inspecting the underside of a bed covered in plain red. (JS)

We recognize the large red bed and wall-paper from *Interior with a Red Bed* (IV-133), but Madame Vuillard's seamstresses have now tiptoed out of the bridal chamber. Kerr-Xavier Roussel appears to be standing in front of the fireplace while Marie peeks beneath the bed. Is the artist showing us



Edgar Degas, *The Rape*, 1868-69, oil on canvas. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania).

some nuptial rite preceding the wedding night, or simply an event taking place a few weeks later? There is a palpable tension in the room, which is rendered with an almost Expressionist-like severity. One is forcibly reminded of the model for the genre, Degas'



IV-136

*The Rape* (see ill.), with its explosive depiction of two lovers cloistered in silence on either side of their bedroom.

#### IV-136

### After the Meal

1893

Oil on cardboard, 28 × 36 cm

Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1977-370

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by the Réunion des Musées Nationaux for the Musée du Luxembourg, Paris, 14 Dec. 1936, 4,000 F; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; transferred to Musée du Louvre (Palais de Tokyo), Paris, 1977; transferred to Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 1986.

**Exhibitions:** France, travelling exhib. [*Peintures du musée d'Art moderne*], 1945-46, no. 14 – Liège-Ghent-Luxembourg, 1948, no. 22 [*Après le repas*, c. 1900] – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 183 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Oct. 1959, no. 8 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 52 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 45 (ill.) – Lyons-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 54, p. 19 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Cassou, Dorival and Homolle 1947, no. 37; and 1954, p. 164 – Compin and Roquebert 1986, p. 280 (ill.) – Rosenblum 1989, pp. 604-605 (col. ill.) – Compin, Lacambre and Roquebert 1990, pp. 476, 477 (ill.).

#### IV-137

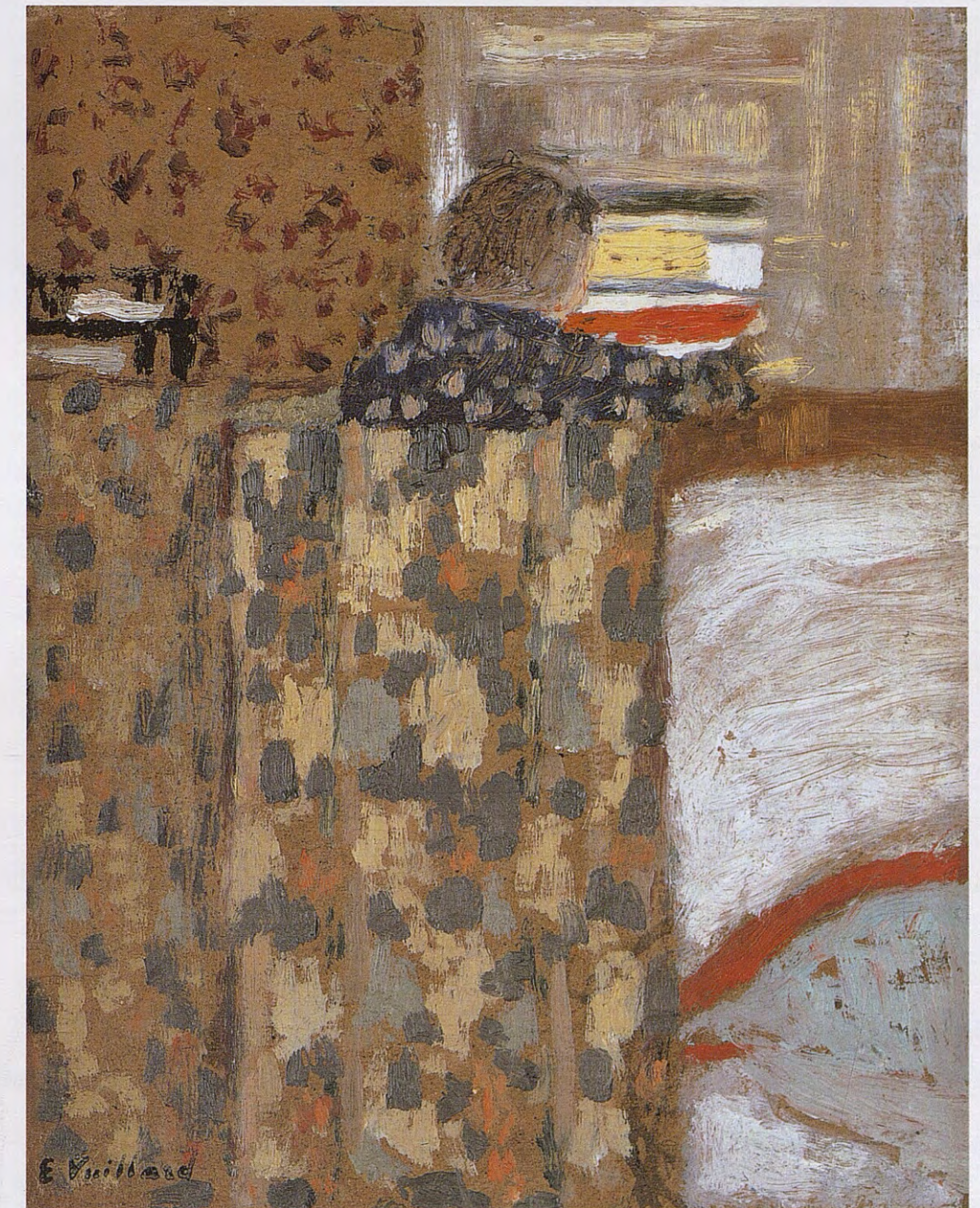
### The Linen Closet

c. 1893

Oil on cardboard, 25 × 20 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1991-23



IV-137

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Private collection – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 21 June 1991, lot 24 (col. ill.), bought in – Galerie Lesieutre, Paris – Acquired in 1991 by the Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, 1996-97, p. 152 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Frèches-Thory 1992, p. 69 (col. ill.).

**Description:** Behind a large screen with a (Neapolitan) yellow, grey and orange floral pattern occupying the left-hand side of the painting, a woman in a dark-blue housecoat dappled with a lighter colour is putting away pieces of yellow and red material in a cupboard. Bed partly covered by a small, light-blue counterpane trimmed with vermillion on the right. Yellow wallpaper with a red pattern. (AC)





IV-138

#### IV-138 Madame Vuillard Sewing

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 19.5 × 24 cm  
Signed, upper right: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Prince Emmanuel Bibesco, Paris; Prince Antoine Bibesco, Paris – Bequeathed to Georges Boris, Paris; Germaine Boris, Paris – Daniel Varenne, Paris – Paul Rosenberg, New York – Helen Fonesman Spencer, Kansas City (Missouri), 1972 – Gift from Mrs Helen F. Spencer to William Rockhill Nelson Trust, Kansas City (Missouri), 1982 – Margo Pollen Schab, New York – William Kelly Simpson, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 23 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 83 (ill.) – Katonah, Katonah Gallery, 1989, no. 6 (col. ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 16 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 166 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Georges 1982, p. 44 – Ciaffa 1985, p. 194, fig. 79 – Easton 1989, pp. 32-33 – Libby 1994, p. 27.

**Description:** Madame Vuillard is portrayed full-face on the left, in a white camisole and dark skirt. Her face, its features underlined by her spectacles, is bowed

over a large blanket with red stripes that extends over the entire width of the composition. Blue wallpaper with grey flowers. Ultramarine and ochre tones beneath a light-coloured door on the left. (JS)

In this fine example of a painterly development of low-key Symbolism, Madame Vuillard *mère* functions as a patch of stable colour amid a flurry of striations and variegations spreading over the composition. Her absorption in her work gives rise to – and creates a place for – a medley of colours. Moreover, her presence introduces a suggestion of depth into the flat space defined by the eiderdown and the wallpaper.



E. V., sketch from the '1893' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 5.9 × 10.9 cm. Private collection.

#### IV-139 Woman Reading

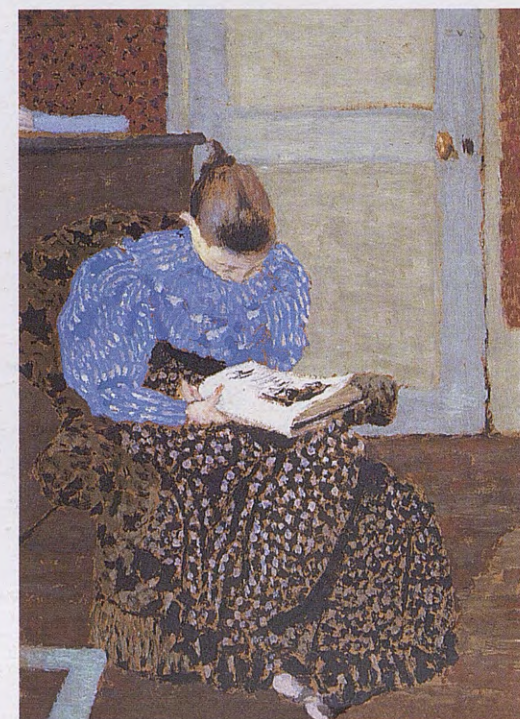
1893  
Oil on cardboard, 35 × 25 cm  
Signed and dated, upper right: *ev 93*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Arsène Alexandre, Paris – Alexandre sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 18-19 May 1903, lot 79 [*Liseuse*] – Georges Moreau, Paris, 410 F – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 24 June 1988, lot 56bis – Alain Delon – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, Oct.-Nov. 1893, no. 1 – Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 108 (col. ill.) – Paris, Didier Imbert, 1990, no. 12 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Warnod 1988, p. 32 (col. ill.) – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, p. 80 (col. ill.) – Beil, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 93.1.

The 'Dutch' character of this deftly framed and highly worked composition has often been noted. Marie is bent over a magazine (whose folded pages refute the theory that it is a book, and instead suggest a fashion magazine). Vuillard has clearly moved beyond the *cloisonniste* patchworks of his early career. What we have here is a particularly subtle concord between the striped blouse – Marie has put aside her smocks to dress in the latest fashion – the spotted,



IV-139



IV-140

light-silvered skirt and the armchair spangled with stars. The three patterned fabrics never blur together, but harmonise in a peaceful, meditative atmosphere.

#### IV-140 Sewing

c. 1893  
Oil on paper, mounted on cardboard, 26 × 22 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, 1948 – Knoedler, New York – Valentine, New York – E. V. Thaw, New York – Dr. Edward Hanley, Bradford (Pennsylvania) – Hanley Gallery of Modern Art – Obelisk Gallery, Boston (Massachusetts) – Sale, Christie's, London, 29 June 1999, lot 25 (col. ill.) – William Randle & Dickinson, London.

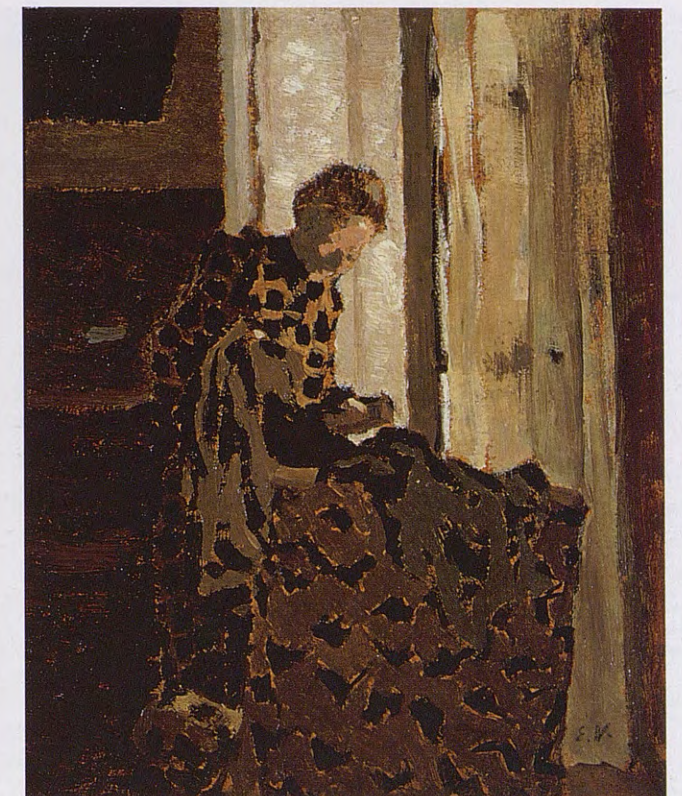
**Exhibition:** New York-Philadelphia, 1967, pp. 45 (ill.), 66.

**Description:** A woman in a brown dress, the skirt of which is trimmed with red, and a dark garment with broad stripes, sits on a low seat, sewing. The light of a lamp hidden by the purple-brown curtain bordering the composition on the right highlights her profile and strikes her clasped hands and the sewing implements on a large table behind her. A fireplace in the left background and, on the right, a chair against a yellow wall. (JS)

#### IV-141 Marie at the Window, Brushing a Garment

c. 1893  
Oil on cardboard, 26.7 × 21.6 cm  
Inscribed, lower right: *E.V.*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Galerie Le Niveau, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 26905), 7 July 1937 – Mlle



IV-141

Bouwens, France, 27 Dec. 1939, 25,000 F – L'Œil Galerie d'Art, Paris – Knoedler, New York, 1963 – Herbert Morris, United States; Willavene S. Morris, United States – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 13 May 1986, lot 15 (col. ill.) – Private collection, Los Angeles (California).

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 45 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 49 – Philadelphia, Museum of Art, 1965.

**Bibliography:** Théodore 1938, p. 126 (ill.) – Schweicher 1955, pl. 4.

**Description:** A portrayal of Marie Vuillard in a checked dress, standing in the light filtering through a window to the right. The back of an armchair is visible in the foreground. (JS)





IV-142

### IV-142 Interior with an Open Window

1893  
Oil on cardboard, 36.5 × 20.5 cm  
Signed and dated, upper left: *ev 93*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** G. M. Collection sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 15 Dec. 1913, lot 50 – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 20122), 682 F – Josse Bernheim, Paris, 19 Dec. 1913, 682 F – Seized by the Nazis from the Château de Rastignac in Dordogne (France) during the German occupation, 1944 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, Oct.-Nov. 1893, no. 4 – London, Tooth & Sons, 1934, no. 41 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 20.

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 20 (ill.) – *Répertoire des biens spoliés en France* 1947, p. 171, no. 3829 (ill.).

**Description:** A female figure wearing a grey and black dress dotted with brown; her seated silhouette could almost be that of a shadow puppet framed by the open window through which we glimpse a yellow

low façade in the background. A second woman standing in a doorway to the left. (JS)

We instantly recognize Marie, clad in the same dress she wears in *The Suitor* (IV-132). Proud and happy for the first time, she poses with the stillness of a woman fulfilled. The spring light flooding in through the window casts a halo round her contentment. The composition leaves nothing to chance – Madame Vuillard appears in the doorway, and this, combined with the dazzling back-lighting, makes this little-known painting one of the artist's finest celebrations of his sister's *vita nova*. It is the joyful pendant to *Interior with Seated Figure* (IV-94).

First shown at the fifth Barc de Bouteville exhibition, the painting made a great impression upon Gustave Geffroy, amongst others: 'The poetry of light enters through open windows and illuminates the dresses of women passing from room to room, standing profiled in a doorway, sewing or reading, bending over a table, leaning against a wall, setting places for supper on a tablecloth coloured with lingering reflections of light... [Vuillard's] painting recalls the woolly back of a tapestry, and gives novel expression to the density of bodies, the silver and gold of light and the velvet of shadows, but it is also deft in expressing attitudes, folded arms and pale hands.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gustave Geffroy, 'Vuillard, Bonnard, Roussel', 29 Oct. 1893; reprinted in Geffroy 1900, pp. 295-296.

### IV-143 The Length of Thread

1893  
Oil on canvas, 42 × 33.5 cm  
Signed and dated, upper left: *ev 93*  
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven (Connecticut), 1983.7.16

**Provenance:** Arsène Alexandre, Paris – Alexandre sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 18-19 May 1903, lot 74 [*Les Couturières*] – Paul Rosenberg, Paris, 700 F – Pierre Goujon, Paris – Wildenstein, New York – Paul Mellon, Upperville (Virginia), 1969 – Gift from Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon, B.A., 1929, to Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, 1983.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Hôtel de la Curiosité, 1924, no. 86 [*Les Ouvrières*] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 29 [*Deux femmes, dont l'une de dos, en noir, assises à une table, devant une fenêtre*] – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 64 – London, Wildenstein, June 1948, no. 12 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 18 (ill.) – London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 119 – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 200 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 27 (col. ill.) – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 11 (ill.) – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 17 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 21 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 40 (ill.) – New Haven, Yale, 1980, no. 3 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 24 (col. ill., *L'Aiguille*) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 163 (col. ill.) – San Francisco-Dallas-Bilbao, 1999-2000, no. 405, p. 250 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 53 – Sutton 1948, p. 248 (ill.) – *Emporium* 120, no. 718, Oct. 1954, p. 174 (ill.) – *Arte figurativa antica e moderna* 7, no. 5, Sept.-Oct. 1959, p. 52 (col. ill.) – Chastel 1960, pl. 54 – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 30 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 115-116, 139, fig. 71 – Georges 1982, pp. 77, 155 – Easton 1989, pp. 43-48 – Forgione 1992, pp. 72, 89, 101, 118, fig. 57 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 54, 56 (col. ill.), 57 – Kahng, exhib. cat., San Francisco-Dallas-Bilbao, 1999-2000, pp. 250 (col. ill.), 259.

Three women, all seamstresses, are working around a table in front of a window. This painting has frequently had its title changed; Elizabeth Easton's *The Length of Thread* seems the best choice. Two features of this celebrated picture leap out instantly: the path of the silvery light, after the manner of Vermeer, and the fine effect of the silhouette seen from behind, depicted as a shadowy mass against a luminous background. The gossamer blue accents on the black dress subtly impart volume to the figure, whose Apollonian gesture gives a lively movement to the composition. The sophistication of her form, pushed to an extreme of elegance, confirms Albert Aurier's adage: 'In nature, all objects are fundamentally nothing more than signified *Ideas*.'<sup>1</sup> Here and there, original touches of colour enliven the composition: the bolt of mauve, watered fabric lying on the jumble in the foreground or the red ribbon under the left arm of the main figure, with its fillet of pure, saturated colour standing out amid a flurry of mixed hues.

This is also one of the first of Vuillard's works to feature a picture within the picture. Up to this time, such quotations simply appeared



IV-143

as abstract shapes on the wall. Here, we have a male portrait that is very like a family portrait – possibly a portrayal of the artist's father, Honoré Vuillard, a captain in the marines who died in 1884 and whose face we recognize from photographs in the Salomon archives (see ill.). Vuillard, as we know, was always extremely reluctant to portray men; to him, family authority remained essentially female. 'I always see [men as] odious caricatures, and have the feeling they are just ridiculous objects...'<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the portrait is tilted at a ridiculous angle here, and seems about to crash down upon the jumbled fabrics beneath it. Whoever the figure it portrays may be, Vuillard has unconsciously included in



Portrait photograph of Honoré Vuillard, father of the artist. Private collection.

*The Length of Thread* a subtle acknowledgment that masculine authority has been abdicated in this world of women sewing, assembling, darning, making whole what lies

in pieces – tasks distantly related to the ancient practices of embalming and echoed at a very much later date by the painter's keen interest in surgery (see *The Surgeons*, IX-226). More plainly than in *Dinner Time* (IV-2) or *At Table, Lunch* (IV-79), Vuillard hints here that the rituals peculiar to his mother's dress-making studio are mimetic equivalents of the sort of quest of Isis to which he subjects – with not a little anguish – his own masculinity.

<sup>1</sup> Albert Aurier, 'Les peintres symbolistes', in *Textes critiques 1889-1892*, Paris, ENSBA, 1995, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 27 July 1894, I.2, fol. 46r.





IV-144

### IV-144 Window, Evening Light

1893

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 20.9 x 26 cm

Signed, lower left: *ev*The Museum of Modern Art, New York,  
The William S. Paley Collection, SPC

19.90

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 9247), 31 March 1899, 250 F – Jack Aghion, Paris, 31 March 1899, 250 F – Aghion sale, 29 March 1918, lot 29 (ill.) – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 21168), 2,750 F – Gaston Bernheim de Villers, 30 March 1918, 2,750 F – Sam Salz, New York – William S. Paley, United States, 1954 – Paley bequest to The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1990.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, Oct.-Nov. 1893, no. 11 [*Fenêtre, effet de soir*] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 21 [*Trois femmes autour d'une table*] – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1992, no. 82, pp. 140, 141 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, pp. 42-43, 62, fig. 22.

**Description:** Slightly to the right of centre, a woman, wearing a hat and a mantlet over her shoulders, is seated at a table by a girl in a black dress intent on her sewing. Opposite stands a woman in a circle of lamp-light that also illuminates the wall on the right. (JS)

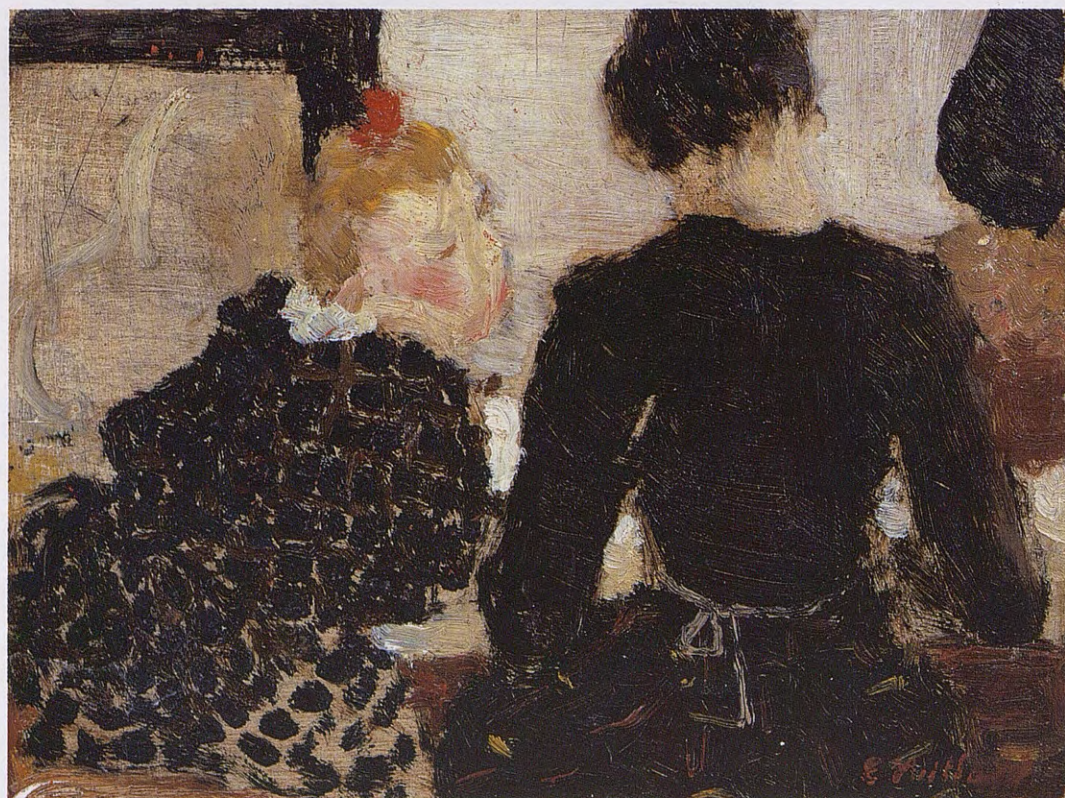
### IV-145 Back View of Two Girls in the Sewing Room

1893

Oil on wood, 16 x 21.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

IV-145

The two dressmaker's apprentices are depicted here in the middle of a conversation. Only a few brushstrokes are needed to capture the gestures and expressions that give meaning to the scene: the diligent girl on the right, and to the left, the chatterbox distracting her with workshop gossip. The artist humorously sets down a reddish-pink highlight on the latter's cheek, and the merest hint of a nose, which is as it were 'flattened' by a pout. The amusing detail of the red knot adorning her hair provides the sole bright colour in an otherwise bistre composition. The hasty rendering of the mantelpiece is delightful, as are the grey daub of the hearth, the scant touches of colour on the black dress and the way the checked dress appears to dissolve downwards. The artist's '1893 sketchbook' in the Salomon archives contains an extremely small preparatory study for this picture (see ill.).



E. V., sketch from the '1893' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 5.9 x 10.9 cm. Private collection.



IV-146

### IV-146 Little Girls on a Blue and Orange Background

1893

Oil on cardboard, 13.4 x 19.4 cm

Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 93*Scottish National Gallery of Modern  
Art, Edinburgh (Great Britain), GMA  
3583

**Provenance:** Gift from Édouard Vuillard to Charles H. Mackie, Edinburgh, 1893 – Stanley Cursiter, Edinburgh, 1920 – Mrs Margaret Hunter, Edinburgh – William Hardie, Glasgow (Great Britain) – Bought by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, 1990, with the assistance of the National Art Collections Fund (Scottish Fund) and of the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, Oct.-Nov. 1893, no. 3 – Glasgow, Hardie 1990, no. 33 (col. ill.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 17, p. 13 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Hardie 1990, p. 122.

In 1893, Vuillard began to distance himself from Nabi precepts and, stroke by stroke, to evolve a personal aesthetic. Nevertheless, one can hardly overlook the link between this painting and Maurice Denis' *Two Sisters beneath a Lamp* (see ill.), with its clearly identifiable figures of Éva and Marthe Meurier at the piano. Both compositions exhibit a penchant for nocturnal reverie, arabesques functioning as musical lines and faces transformed into purely rhythmic images. Commenting on the fifth exhibition to be held at the Le Barc de Bouteville gallery, Léon-Paul Fargue memorably described the 'strategies of torpor' underlying these paintings: 'an

ambushing of busy characters remembering behind a screen an object forgotten, an instruction overlooked; and going back to deliver it, firing off some household command in a rustling of colour that glides and delights here and there with a silky accent dampened and galled like Liberty satin to a sea-green scale – eyes dimmed by contact, an indoors restiveness, an expressive and controlled fastidiousness such as comes when watching over a sick patient, finery that follows yet conceals the muscles, a reluctance to engage in forbidden games, the animate shrinking before the inanimate, the penny-pinching charm of lights lit too late at nightfall – and a dispirited, expectant waiting, ready to give a start.<sup>1</sup>



Maurice Denis, *Two Sisters beneath a Lamp*, 1891, oil on canvas. Private collection.

<sup>1</sup> L.-P. Fargue, 'Peinture (chez Le Barc de Bouteville)', *L'Art littéraire*, Dec. 1893, quoted in Guisan and Jakubec 1973, p. 239.





IV-147

#### IV-147 The Blue Sleeve

1893  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 26.6 × 22.3 cm  
Signed and dated, upper right: *ev / 93*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Ambroise Vollard, Paris (stock no. 3814), 1899, 100 F – Wildenstein, New York – Doris Warner Vidor, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 20 May 1982, lot 235 (col. ill.) – Jan Krugier, Geneva – Malcolm Wiener, New York, 1987 – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, Oct.–Nov. 1893, no. 2 [*Intérieur, jeune fille assise*] – New York, Wildenstein, 1940, no. 78 (ill.) – Cleveland–New York, 1954, pp. 42 (ill.), 101 – Houston–Washington D.C.–Brooklyn, 1989–90, no. 58 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, pp. 177–180, 272, fig. 64 – Easton 1989, pp. 82–83 – Forgione 1992, pp. 117–118, fig. 65.

First shown at the fifth exhibition at the Le Barc de Bouteville gallery, this panel fired the enthusiasm of Thadée Natanson, who wrote of 'that extraordinary young woman in a blue

dress, her arms outstretched, whose disturbing memory lingers on'.<sup>1</sup> The distortion of perspective is superb: Marie gazes at us, twisting round on a chair that is rendered with a detailed photographic relief in the foreground, whilst an assistant seems to recede in the background, on a visual plane that it is almost impossible to place. Both figures are situated in the room with the partially glazed partition found in *Interior with Three Women Conversing* (IV-115). Vuillard has captured a moment of grace as his sister poses for him, conscious of his scrutiny and holding a newspaper that fills the lower left-hand triangle of the composition. There is a substantial tonal contrast between the various sources of lighting falling on the two faces. The shadow on Marie's face reminds us of Vuillard's early portraits of her<sup>2</sup> and imparts to her vacant gaze the semblance of an 'impenetrable mask'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thadée Natanson, 'Expositions. Un groupe de peintres...', *La Revue Blanche* 5, no. 25, Nov. 1893, p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> Ciaffa 1985, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Forgione 1992, p. 118.

#### IV-148 The Meal with Flowers

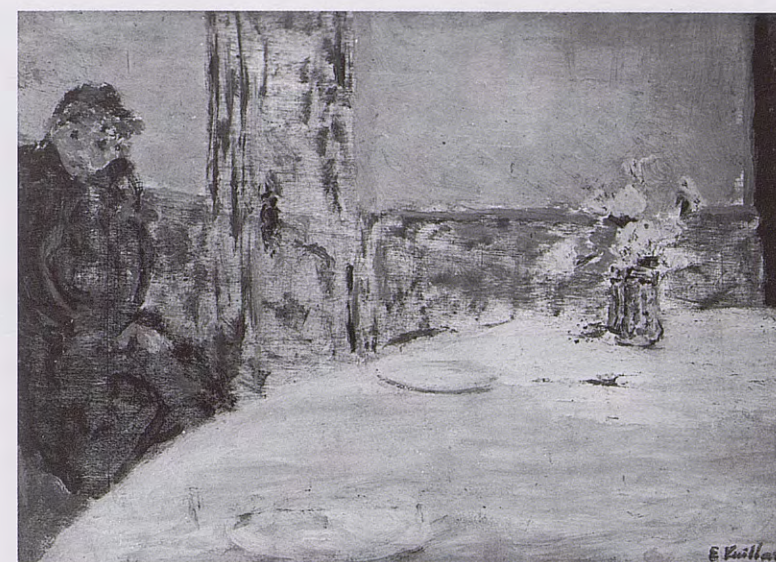
1893  
Oil on cardboard, 15 × 21 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Sale, Salons du Trianon-Palace, Versailles, 28 March 1965, lot 107 (ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Galerie Vendôme, 1944, no. 14.



IV-148



IV-149

#### IV-149 The Wedding Anniversary Roses

1894  
Oil on wood, 24 × 32 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1954 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Marie is seated left. The foreground is entirely filled with part of a round tabletop. The pink flowers in the vase, right, harmonise with the grey hue of the background panels separated by a frame that is coloured yellow by the wooden support showing through. Marie is clad in blue. (JS)

#### IV-150 Madame Vuillard at Table

1894  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 27 × 23 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left: *E Vuillard 94*

**National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection, 1970.17.97**

**Provenance:** Valentine, New York – American Art Association sale, Anderson Galleries, 24 March 1932, lot 26, \$260 – Captain Richard A. Peto, Isle of Wight (Great Britain) – Lefevre, London, 1944

(ill.); and 1978, pp. 106, 107 (ill.) – Houston–Washington D.C.–Brooklyn, 1989–90, no. 67 (ill.).

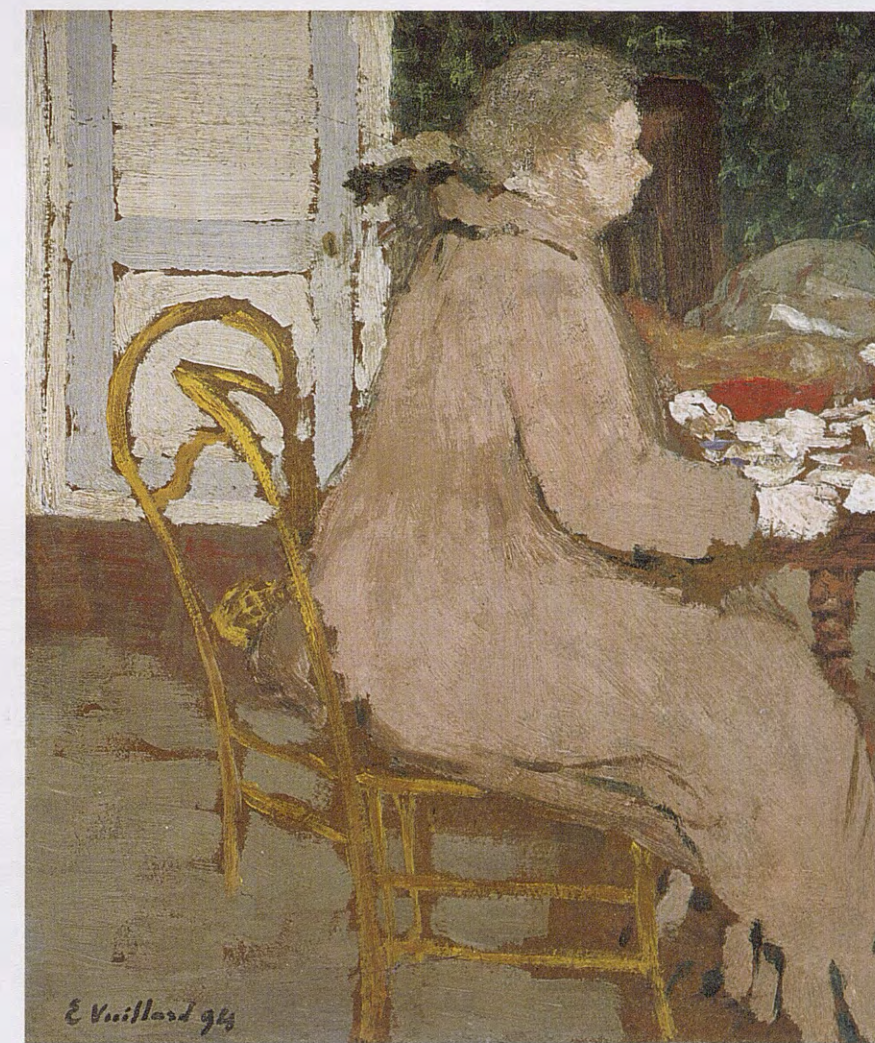
**Bibliography:** Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1975, no. 2469, pp. 372, 373 (ill.) – Daniel 1984, p. 173, fig. 64 – Easton 1989, p. 91.

**Description:** The artist's mother sits sideways in a pinkish-mauve housecoat, her hands on a table laid with white crockery and enlivened with a touch of red. The bright yellow backs of two wooden chairs loop against the grey of the door. Green wall; grey and red floor. (JS)

A preparatory sketch for this composition is found in Vuillard's Journal under the date 7 August 1894 (see ill.).



E. V., Journal, I, 2, fol. 48r.



IV-150





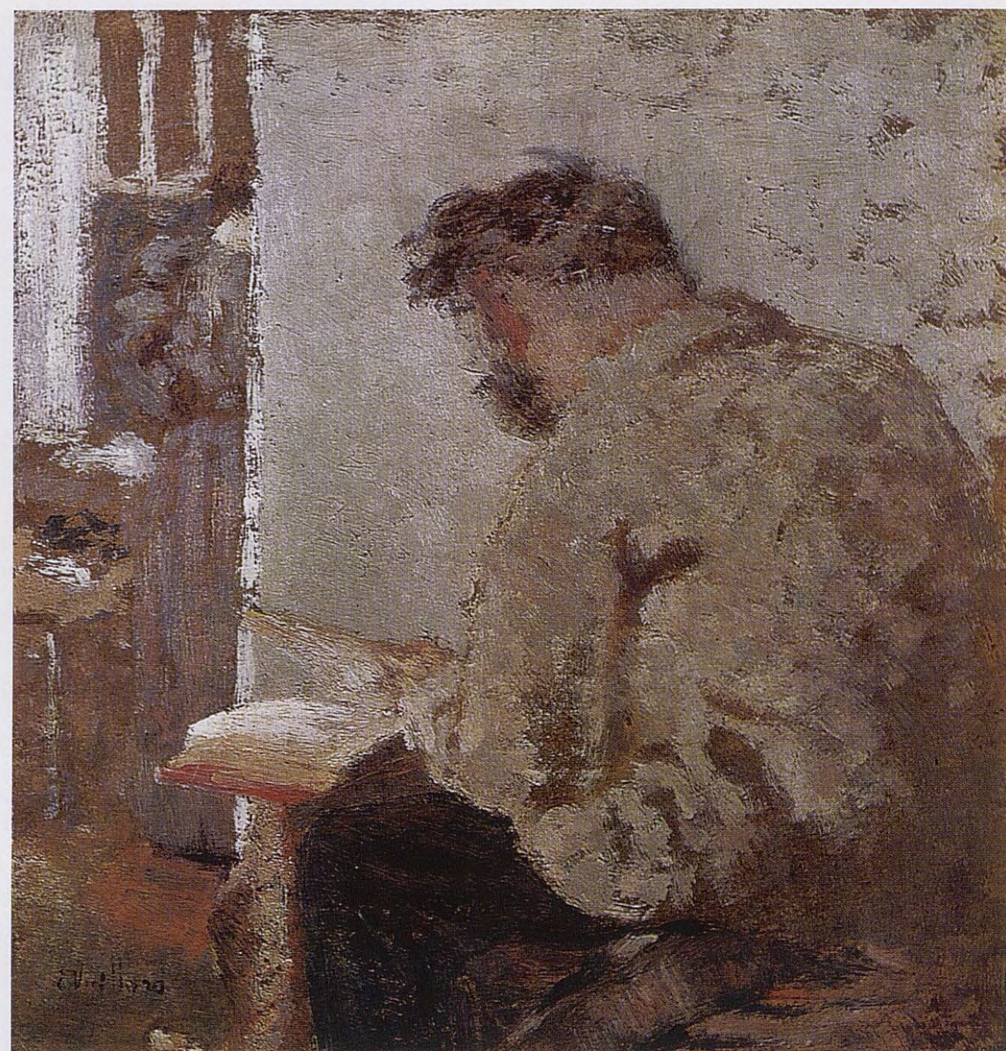
IV-151

# **IV-151** **Profile of Marie in a Blue Dress, Sitting**

1894  
Oil on cardboard, 25 × 13 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Olivier Sainsère, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 57.



IV-152

# **IV-152** **Cipa in Shirtsleeves, Reading**

c. 1894 or 1896  
Oil on cardboard, 24 × 23 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection, South Africa

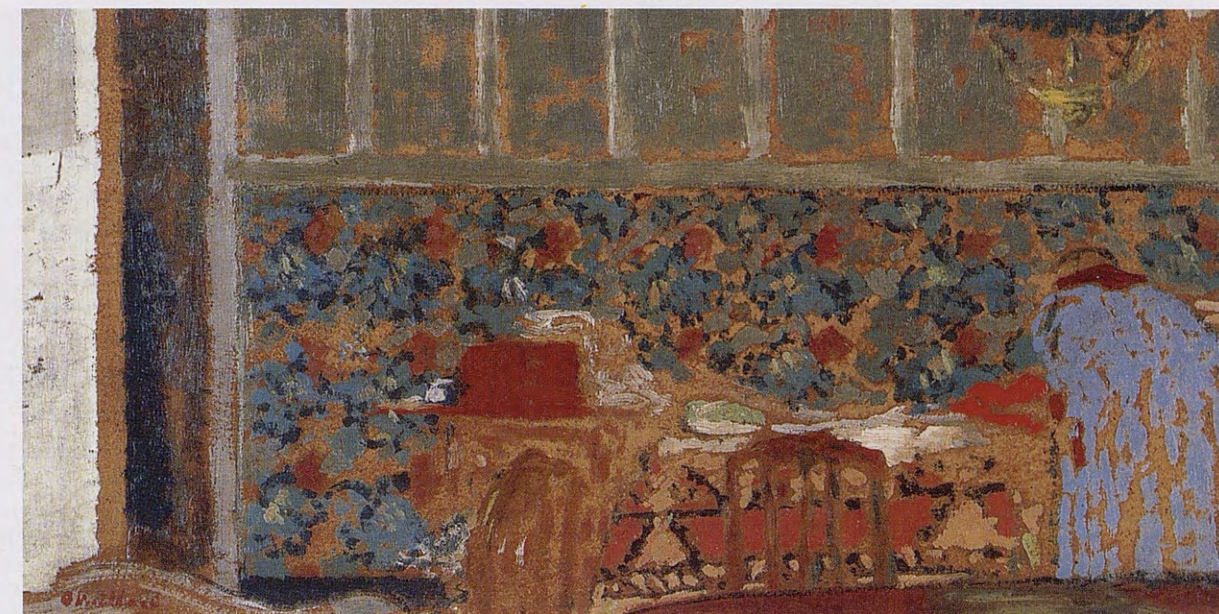
**Provenance:** Prince Emmanuel Bibesco, Paris; Prince Antoine Bibesco, Paris – Galerie d'Art Latin, Stockholm – Galerie Georges Moos, Geneva, 1949 – E. J. Van Wisselingh, Amsterdam – Mrs I. A. Chipman, Montreal (Quebec), c. 1960 – Alex Graydon – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 29 Nov. 1976, lot 27 (col. ill.) – Private collection, South Africa.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 35 [*Homme en chemise de dos, feuilletant un livre*] – Montréal, Musée des Beaux Arts, 1960, no. 136 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Hubbard 1962, p. 159.

**Description:** *Wearing brown trousers and a loose-fitting shirt highlighted with brighter accents throughout, K-X Roussel is seen in a three-quarters profile seated in front of a grey partition, holding a book with a red edge. His ear forms a pink patch beneath his greyish hair. Marie is standing in the next room; her ochre-coloured silhouette partly concealed by the partition is visible on the left.* (JS)

In his description of this painting, Jacques Salomon identifies the seated figure as Kerr-Xavier Roussel, but in our opinion the reading figure is Misia's brother, Cipa. This would move forward the dating of the work to circa 1896 instead of 1894.



IV-153

# **IV-153** **The Two Tables**

1894  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on canvas, 26.1 × 51.1 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*  
The Phillips Collection, Washington D.C., Acc. no. 2013

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 16727, *Les Deux Tables*), 5 July 1908, 150 F – Donated to Mme Félix Fénéon, Paris, 21 Feb. 1911 – Hector Brame, Paris – Sale, Galerie Georges Moos, Geneva, 10 March 1951, lot 156 (ill.) – Carroll Carstairs, New York – The Phillips Collection, Washington D.C., 1954.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Feb. 1911, no. 14 – Washington D.C., Adams Davidson, 1978, no. 23 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 33 (col. ill.) – San Francisco-Dallas-Bilbao, 1999-2000, no. 403, p. 254 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Salomon and Vaillant 1950, fol. 5 – Easton 1989, p. 53 – Kahng, exhib. cat., San Francisco-Dallas-Bilbao, 1999-2000, p. 254 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *The partly glazed partition with its red and green floral wallpaper and, on the far left, the luminous white rectangle of a door standing ajar. A woman in blue is seen bending over a variety of red, white and green pieces of fabric beneath a bright yellow ceiling lamp on the right; slightly left of centre is a maroon sewing-machine cover. The edge of a brown table is just barely visible in the foreground.* (AC)

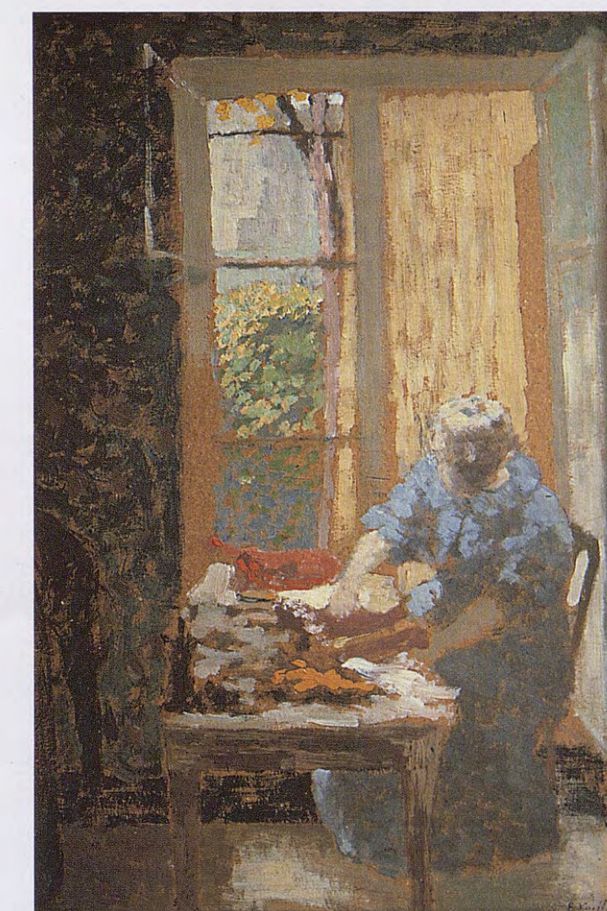
# **IV-154** **The Dressmaker**

1894  
Oil on cardboard, 49 × 33 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Pétridès, Paris, 1947 – O'Hana, London – Private collection, Switzerland – Galerie Schmit, Paris, c. 1989.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Schmit, 1990, no. 74 (col. ill.); and 1994, no. 59 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *A window with an open hinged pane overlooking a courtyard with trees in pale green leaf; a seated woman in a navy blue dress; and various pieces of fabric lying on a table. Red and orange patches animate the edge of the table and the bottom of the window.* (AC)



IV-154





IV-155

# IV-155 The Window

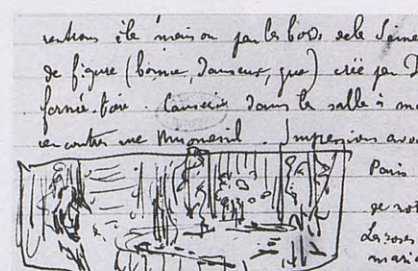
1894  
Oil on canvas, 37.9 × 45.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York,  
The William S. Paley Collection,  
SPC 40.90

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – William S. Paley Collection, 1957 – Paley bequest to The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1990.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 20 (ill.) – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1992, no. 84, p. 143 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, pp. 53, 65, fig. 32 – Sidlauskas 1997, pp. 99, 101 (ill.).

A drawing from Vuillard's Journal dated 28 July 1894 (see ill.) could be the initial – and somewhat different – idea for this particu-



E. V., Journal, I,2, fol. 44v. (28 July 1894).

larly fine composition, one of the artist's most balanced works of 1894. This was Vuillard's 'Ibsen Year'. He was more active than ever at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, where he painted sets for the Norwegian playwright's dramas, which may explain the

painting's decidedly theatrical perspective accentuating Marie's loneliness one year after her marriage to Kerr-Xavier Roussel. The detail of the yellow wall behind the window is particularly lovely; it directs the light to the centre of the composition, while obstructing the horizon and emphasising the picture's fatalistic character. Notice, too, the scattering of light-coloured dots over the grey ground of the glazing on the door dividing the dining-room from the kitchen, and how it reproduces the pebbly effect of a type of glass pane – translucent but opaque – that was becoming increasingly popular in lower middle-class interiors at the time. We get another glimpse of this 'pebbled' glass in the following composition, *The Doors* (IV-156).

# IV-156 The Doors

1894  
Oil on cardboard, 50.8 × 41.6 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
(Australia), 2950-4

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Lefevre, London, 1949 – Felton, 1951 – Felton bequest to the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1952.

**Bibliography:** Raynal 1949, p. 96 (col. ill.) – Hoff and Plant 1968, p. 13 – Melbourne 1970, p. 32.

**Description:** A woman is seen on the right, entering a kitchen through a door edged by a white curtain beneath an ochre-coloured wall; a green pot sits on a shelf in the background. On the left is a brown partition with a half-open door and transom; speckled pink-and-grey shadows play over the glass panes. (AC)



IV-156

# IV-157 The Kitchen

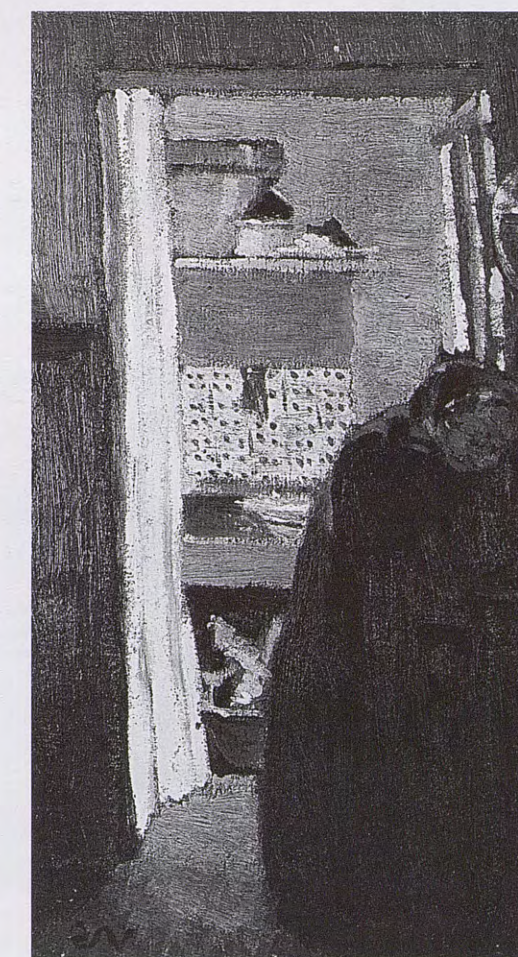
c. 1892  
Oil on cardboard, 34 × 18 cm  
Signed, lower left: *ev*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Georges Lévy, Paris, c. 1938 – Mme C. Besson, Neuilly-sur-Seine (France), c. 1972 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 24 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 33 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 12.

# IV-158 Madame Vuillard in Her Kitchen

1894  
Oil on canvas, 40 × 33 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, Geneva



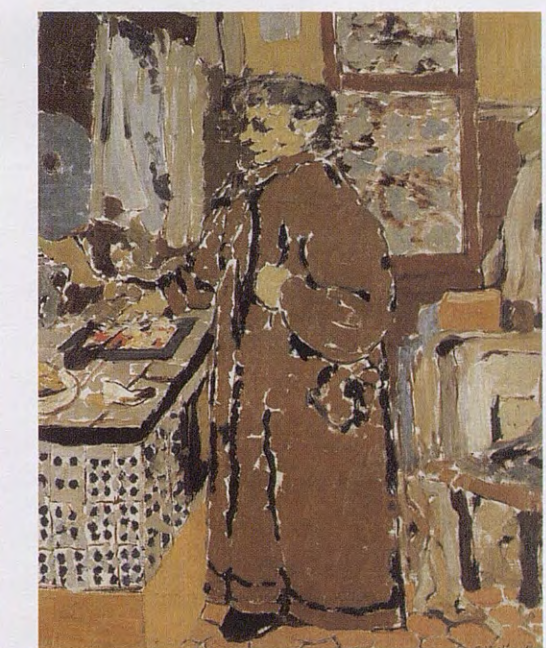
IV-157

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Beyeler, Basle (Switzerland), c. 1959 – A. N. Donskay, Paris – Mme Strassart, Paris – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 6 Dec. 1963, lot 25 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Christie's, London, 24 June 1966, lot 9 (col. ill.), bought in – Jan Krugier, Geneva – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 8 Dec. 1970, lot 56 (col. ill.), bought in – Jan Krugier, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 31 March 1982, lot 79 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Phillips, London, 29 June 1988, lot 3 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Christie's, London, 4 Dec. 1990, lot 266 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Christie's, London, 30 June 1992, lot 114 (col. ill.), bought in – Jan Krugier, Ditesheim et Cie, Geneva.

**Exhibitions:** Basle, Beyeler 1960, no. 12 (ill.) – Geneva, Krugier, 1969, no. 86 (ill.) – New York, Loeb and Krugier, 1969, no. 88 (ill.) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 36 (ill.).

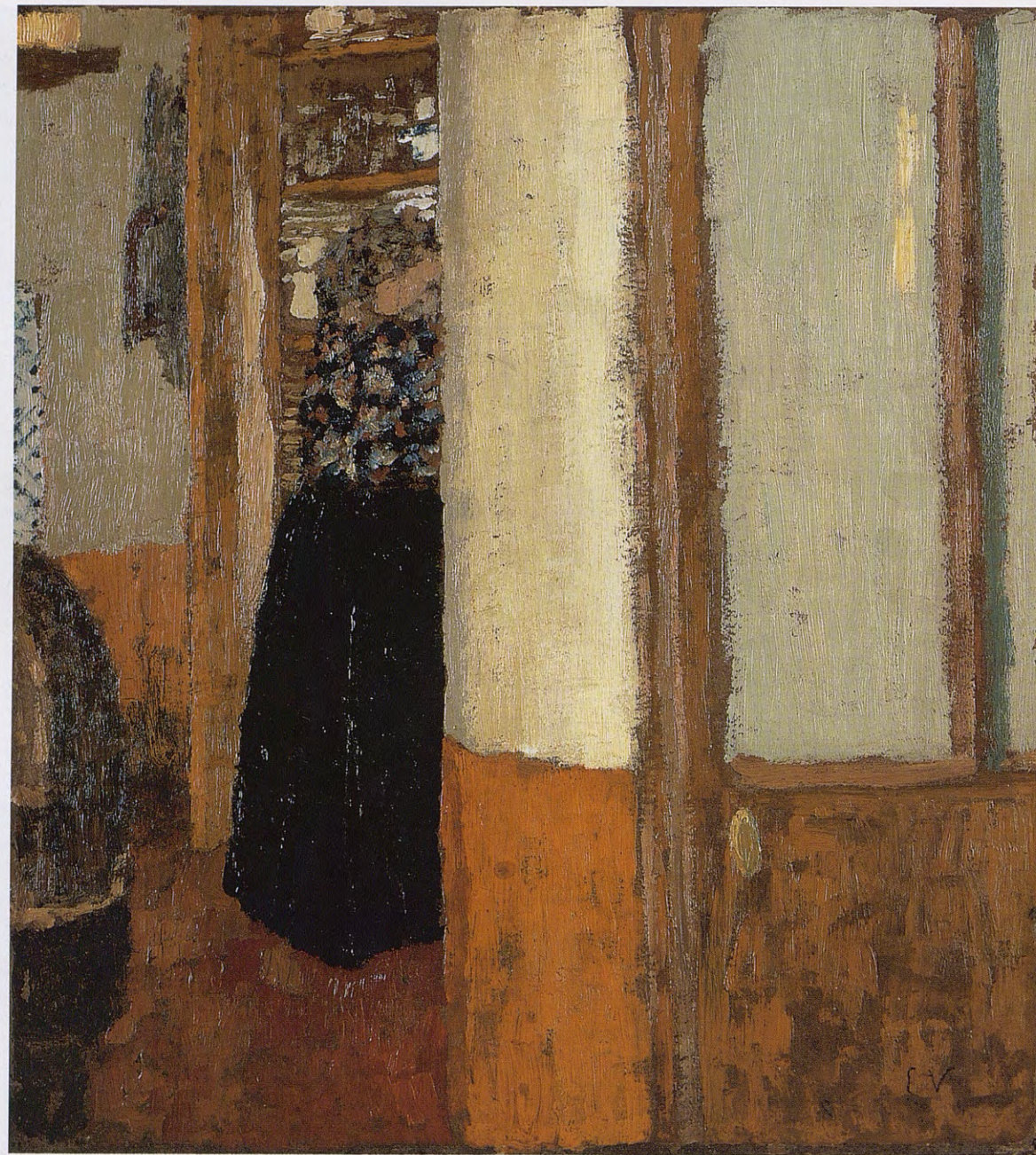
**Bibliography:** Daniel 1984, pp. 101, 103, fig. 32.

**Description:** A woman in a faded yellow dress is seen in profile standing in front of a blue-tiled stove. Flat tones, with the white canvas ground showing through along black contours. (AC)



IV-158





IV-159

## IV-159

## Woman at a Cupboard

c. 1894-95

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 37 x 33.5 cm

Signed, lower right: EV

Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne (Germany), wrm 3049

**Provenance:** Ambroise Vollard, Paris – Étienne Bignou, Paris – Paul Pétrides, Paris – Paul Streckler, Wiesbaden (Germany), c. 1942 – Wilhelm Strecker, Mainz (Germany) – Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, 1958.

**Exhibitions:** Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 45 (col. ill.) – Lyon, 1990, no. 57, p. 61 (col. ill., *La Femme au placard*) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 169 (col. fig.) [*L'Armoire à linge*].

**Bibliography:** Aust 1959, p. 34 – Büchner and Kroh 1959, p. 176 – Förster 1959a, no. 9; and 1959b, p. 252 – Andree 1964, no. 3049, pp. 125, 300 (ill.) – Cologne 1965, no. 3049 [*Mädchen am Wäscheschränk*], p. 176, – Daniel 1984, p. 95, fig. 29 – Hesse and Schlagenhauser 1986, p. 89, fig. 823 – Easton 1989, pp. 65-66 – Dumas, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, pp. 60, 62 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 55 (col. ill.).

The scene takes place in the Vuillards' kitchen, almost as if we had come in through the right-

hand door seen in *The Window* (IV-155) and were looking at the artist's mother putting things away in a cupboard. It is probably not a linen cupboard – as was suggested in the 1965 Wallraf-Richartz-Museum catalogue and in the later Paris exhibition – since linen is not usually kept in a kitchen. That this is indeed a kitchen is apparent from the blue tiles bordering the sink on the far left.

## IV-160

## The Yellow Curtain

c. 1893

Oil on canvas, 35 x 39 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection, 1970.17.95

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Edward Molyneux, Paris, c. 1952 – Mrs Ailsa Mellon Bruce, New York, 1955 – Mellon Bruce bequest to the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1970.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 6 – Washington D.C.-New York, 1952 – San Francisco, Legion of Honor, 1961, no. 72 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1966, no. 175 (ill.); and 1978, pp. 102, 103 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 46 (col. ill.) – Florence, 1998, no. 9, p. 48 (col. ill.); and Montreal, 1998, no. 177, p. 26 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Walker 1975, no. 896, p. 585 (col. ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1975, no. 2467, pp. 372, 373 (ill.) – Daniel 1984,

p. 389, fig. 142 – Warnod 1988, p. 31 (col. ill.) – Easton 1989, p. 66 – Forgione 1992, pp. 41, 118, 146, 213, fig. 10 – Sidlauskas 1997, p. 94 (ill.) – Cogeval, exhib. cat. 1998, Florence, p. 180, and Montreal, p. 120.

We are now in Madame Vuillard *mère's* bedroom: a mere curtain separates the bedroom itself from the wash corner, as was often the case in *petit-bourgeois* homes of this period. Dressed in a nightgown, her hair plaited down her back, the artist's mother is about to begin her ablutions. We are intruders on a scene from which we will shortly have to withdraw: much of the poetry of Vuillard's work at this juncture lies in secret glimpses of this kind, in which the viewer 'chances', as it were, upon a particularly intimate scene. The painter, moreover, associates the aura of mystery surrounding his mother with what, if one thinks of Degas or Bonnard, is one of the most sensual themes in French painting: a woman at her *toilette*. Madame Vuillard is here the vestal virgin of an everyday reality raised to the level of an unfathomable mystery.

True to his quest for the *multum in parvo*, Vuillard conjures up an entire civilisation with a few dabs of colour and a scattering of sketchy details: the floral wallpaper, the modesty of the surroundings, the cramped atmosphere of the bedroom. This quick sketch is a perfect example of the artist's delicate 'balancing' of effects; the naturalistic attention to even the most minor detail serves to expound an abstract idea. The act of parting a curtain is translated into an almost theatrical 'revelation', in the Symbolist sense of the term; it also affords us a direct, frontal view of two painterly surfaces – two planes of reality – slipped one on top of the other, as it were. Many years later – in 1920 – as he was making his way to the Closerie des Genêts at Vaucluse, where he had settled the dear old lady, Vuillard exclaimed in Jacques Salomon's presence, 'my mother is my muse!'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Salomon 1953, p. 13.



IV-160





IV-161

**IV-161**  
**La Berceuse. Marie Roussel**  
**in Bed**

1894  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
panel, 28 × 49 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Musée Picasso, Paris, R.F. 1973-93

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris, c. 1942 – Pablo Picasso – Donation Picasso, 1973; Musée Picasso, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Carré, 1942, no. 19 [*Au chevet*, c. 1900] – Paris, Louvre, 1978, no. 38 (ill.) – Munich, Kunsthalle, 1998, no. 84, p. 235 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Besson 1949, fig. 7 – Mercanton 1949, col. pl. 6 – *Paris Match*, 9 June 1973 (ill.) – Daniel 1984, p. 115, fig. 38 – Seckel-Klein, exhib. cat., Munich, 1998, p. 235, no. 84.

**Description:** The principle motif is the counterpane with yellow squares combined with dashes of red against a yellow wall. The patient has pulled up the bed covers over her nose. Her head looks blurred on the pillow. An old woman is seen in profile on the right, wearing a black blouse and a striped skirt; her

features are accentuated by the brownish hue of the cardboard showing through under the varnish. (AC)

The apparent serenity of this picture is misleading. In reality, it depicts one of the first tragedies in the marriage of Marie and Kerr-Xavier Roussel. While expecting a baby due for the end of the year (December 1894), Marie fell ill in November and gave birth to a stillborn child. A letter from Vuillard to Alfred Natanson, dated 24 November 1894, bears witness to the grief-stricken atmosphere within the family: 'My dear Fred, your distraught letter finds me overwhelmed as well. My poor sister was afflicted by a serious illness, and we were on the verge of thinking she was lost. She is a little better now, but not yet completely out of danger. We are only somewhat reassured. I'm writing to you from her bedside, where I have been thinking of you all night'.<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Olga Natanson on 15 December, the artist tells of the tragic outcome of Marie's illness: 'I have not been to the rue Pigalle since Monday, as I have had to stay home because of my sister's condition. She

is finally on the mend and we hope that there is no longer any danger. She gave birth two days ago, her child did not live'.<sup>2</sup> Vuillard, who spent many days by his sister's bedside, painted a number of sketches that record this crisis. *La Berceuse*, a solid composition in which the soft-focus treatment of Marie's blurred face contrasts sharply with her mother's thin-edged profile, was in Picasso's personal collection.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Vuillard to Alfred Natanson, postmarked 24 Nov. 1894, Salomon archives.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Vuillard to Olga Natanson, 15 Dec. 1894, Salomon archives.

**IV-162**  
**Sick Woman Reading**

1894  
Oil on cardboard, 21.5 × 28.5 cm  
Inscribed, lower left: *EV 9*[?]  
Private collection, New York

**Provenance:** Milo Beretta, Montevideo, 1935 – Paul Rosenberg, New York – Private collection, New York, 1956.



IV-162



IV-163

**Exhibitions:** Montevideo, Amigos del arte, 1935, no. 73 – Montevideo, Berro, 1946, no. 24 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Potter 1984, no. 72 (ill.).

**IV-163**  
**The Red Eiderdown**

1894  
Oil on cardboard, 27 × 46 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

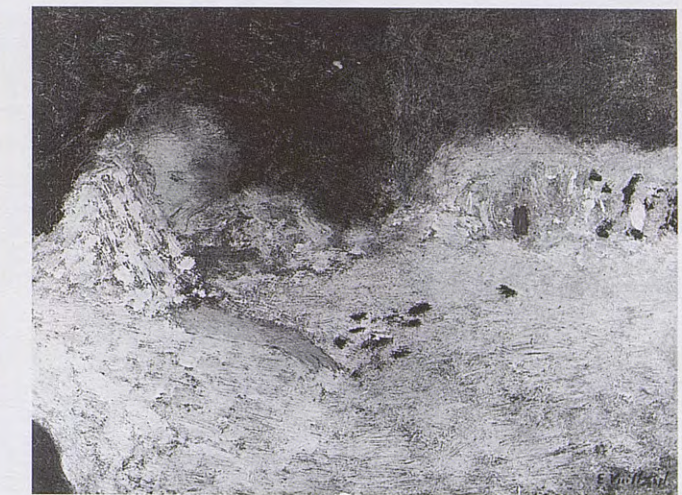
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 21 March 1974, lot 94 (ill.) – Galerie Bellier, Paris, and Peter Matthews, London – Sale, mairie du IX<sup>e</sup> arrondissement, Paris, 19 Nov. 1990, lot 58 (col. ill.) – Galerie Bellier, Paris – Private collection.

**Bibliography:** Romand 1974, p. 91 (ill.), fig. 1.

**Description:** A quick sketch of a speckled red blanket and a dazzling eiderdown on a white bed. (AC)



IV-164



IV-165

**IV-164**  
**Marie in Bed**

1894  
Oil on cardboard, 17 × 26 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris.

**Description:** Bust of a woman in a black cape, emerging from white bed-sheets. Beige background. A rough sketch. (JS)

**IV-165**  
**Young Woman in Bed**

1894  
Oil on cardboard, 25.5 × 35.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection, Princeton (New Jersey).

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1956 (not in cat.).

**Description:** A female figure on the left, wearing a white peignoir with a mere hint of pink. The sheet and the blankets she is wrapped in are white. Various indistinct objects lie on the bed in front of her. Her nose is drawn with a pencil. Traces of restoration in the background above her head. (JS)





IV-166

#### IV-166 The Seamstress

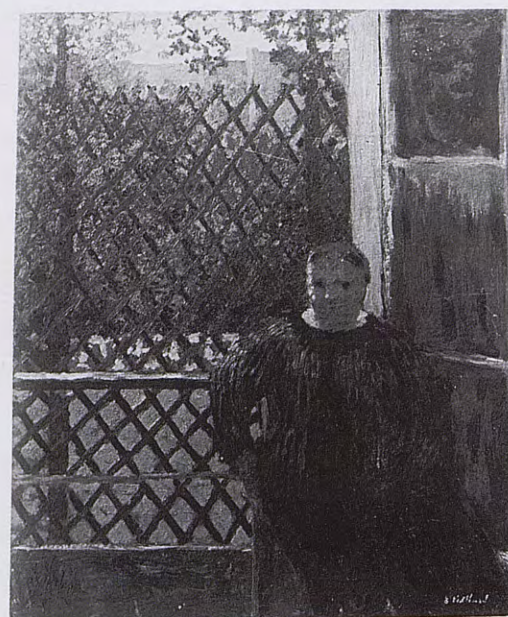
1894  
Study for a lithograph (R-M 13)  
Pastel on paper, 25.2 × 16.4 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 28 June 1989, lot 305 (ill.), bought in – William Weston Gallery, London – Barbara Krakow Gallery, Boston (Massachusetts) – Private collection.

#### IV-167 In Front of the Lattice Window

c. 1895  
Oil on hardboard, 45.7 × 38 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, c. 1947 – Current whereabouts unknown.



IV-167

**Description:** A large lattice in front of a window divides the dark room from a green and ochre garden surrounded by high grey walls. A woman is seated on the right with her back to the window frame. Blue sky, reddish-brown primer showing through in places. (AC)



IV-168

#### IV-168 Woman Sewing by Lamplight

1895  
Oil on hardboard, 32 × 36 cm  
Signed and dated, lower centre:  
*E Vuillard 95*  
Private collection, Great Britain

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Arsène Alexandre, Paris, 1897, 100 F – Alexandre sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 18-19 May 1903, lot 76 (ill.) – Georges Hoentschel, Paris, 510 F; Mme Hoentschel de Malherbe, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 3 July 1968, lot 62 (ill.) – Doris Herschorn, London – Private collection, Great Britain.

**Exhibitions:** Brussels, [La Libre Esthétique], 1896, no. 429 – London, Royal Academy, 1979-80, no. 237 (col. ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1980, no. 150 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** *L'Œil*, no. 166, Oct. 1968, p. 46 (ill.).

**Description:** An oil lamp with its lampshade stands on a small square table in the foreground left, casting its brightness on a woman bent over her work and on the objects that surround her. On the wall in the background various items and implements, all of the same hue, are suspended from a broad shelf. (JS)



IV-169

#### IV-169 Madame Vuillard Inspecting Her Work

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 29.7 × 27.8 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Léon Delaroche, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 28 [*Dame âgée examinant son ouvrage*, c. 1893].

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 53 – Mercanton 1949, col. pl. 4 – Raynal 1949, p. 98 (col. ill.) – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 30.

**Description:** The artist's mother is seated in the lower left, attired in a black blouse with red spots, her spectacles perched on her nose, her face sharply bent over the green fabric in her hands. Her sewing table with its spools and balls of wool forms a light band in the immediate foreground. A light grey wall and a bit of corridor in the background. The floor is beige. (JS)

Few Vuillard paintings come as close to the silent world of the Danish artist, Vilhelm Hammershøi, as this. Madame Vuillard's red and black blouse has a positively stately air in this otherwise whitish-grey, almost plaster-textured composition.





IV-170

# IV-170 The Sewing Room

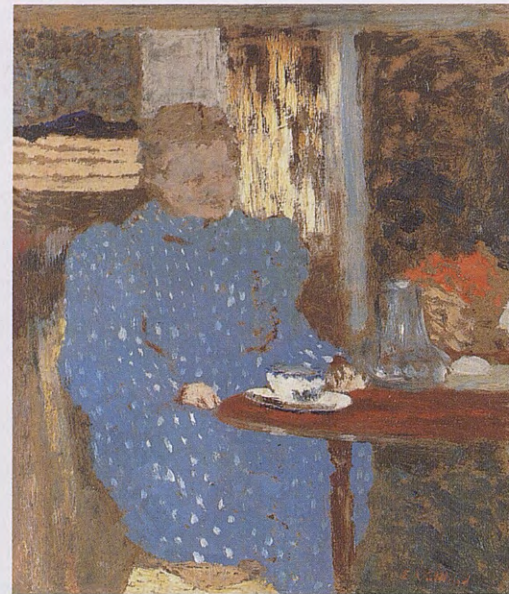
c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 35 × 27 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Private collection, Germany

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Nathan, Zurich (Switzerland) – Private collection, Germany.

**Exhibitions:** Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 61 [*The Stay-Maker's Workroom*, 1892] – London, Wildenstein, June 1948, no. 9 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 13 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 9 [*L'Atelier de la corsetière*, 1891] – Lyons, Beaux-Arts, 1949, no. 130 (ill.) – London, Marlborough, 1954, no. 62 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 29 (ill.) – Munich, Kunstverein, 1959, no. 30 (ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 21 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 15 – Nancy, Beaux-Arts, 1963, no. 138 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 21 (col. ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 27 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 28 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1945b, p. 3 (ill.), 1946a, p. 51, p. 39 (ill.), 1946b, p. 68 (ill.); and 1948c, col. pl. 2 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 32-33, 48 – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 24 – Georges 1982, p. 50 – Warnod 1988, p. 23.

**Description:** A light-coloured partition variegated with green and red extends to the left, bisecting the composition. In a room with a yellowish floor, a woman dressed in grey stands in front of a table covered with objects in bright red and dark tones. Presented against a bare, light-coloured wall in the background, a lamp and a red box on a black mantelpiece echo the colours on the partition. (AC)



IV-171

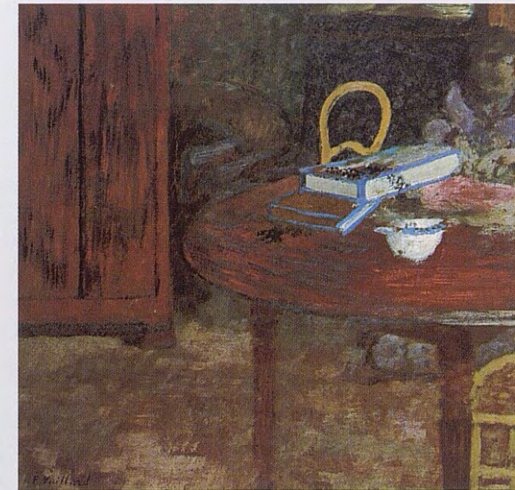
# IV-171 Old Woman Seated at a Table

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 32 × 27 cm  
Stamp 2, lower right  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Seligmann, New York – Mrs Maurice Newton, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 3 May 1973, lot 70 (col. ill.) – Sam Salz, New York – Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London.

**Exhibition:** New York, Seligmann, 1948, no. 7 [*La Mère de l'artiste*, c. 1891].

**Description:** An old woman in a spotted housecoat, seen from the left in a three-quarters profile; her face is merely adumbrated. A cup and a metal teapot are visible on the table on the right. (JS)



IV-172

# IV-172 Darning

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 29 × 29.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris, 1942 – M. Morissey, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 9 Dec. 1977, lot 58 (col. ill.) – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1973, no. 6 – Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978, no. 32 (col. ill.).

**Description:** The round mahogany table on the right has been laid. Madame Vuillard, clad in bluish-grey, is seated behind it, working on a pearly pink fabric placed next to a white and ultramarine sewing box and a small blue and white dish. A chair's yellow back stands out sharply against a black curtain in the background. A beige bed and a reddish-brown chest on the left. Grey and green highlights on the floor and walls. Part of a black wooden chair on the right. (JS)

# IV-173 Woman in Pink, Knitting, Seen Full-Face

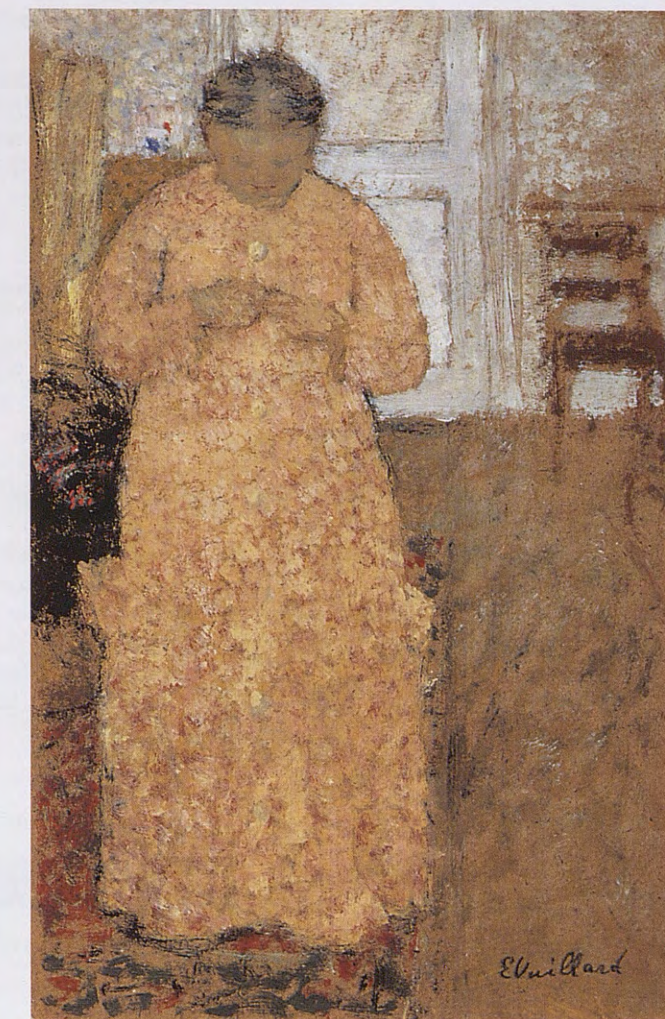
c. 1895-98  
Oil on cardboard, 25.5 × 16 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam (Netherlands), 2897 (MK)

**Provenance:** Olivier Sainsère, Paris; Jacques Sainsère, Paris – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 29 June 1962, lot 30 (ill.) – Vitale Bloch, Paris and The Hague – Vitale Bloch bequest to the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, 1976.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 56.

**Bibliography:** Rotterdam 1978, no. 34, p. 83 (ill.).

1889-1898



IV-173

# IV-174 Woman in Blue Dress with White Spots

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 33 × 38.7 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Germany

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Georges Seligmann, New York – Knoedler, New York, c. 1979 – JPL Fine Arts, London – Galerie Salis, Salzburg (Austria) – Private collection, Bad Homburg (Germany), c. 1991.

**Exhibitions:** Salzburg, Salis, 1985, no. 19 (col. ill.) – London, JPL, 1988, no. 1 (col. ill.).



IV-174





IV-175

#### IV-175 Madame Vuillard Brushing Her Hair

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on canvas,  
25.5 × 19 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown



IV-176

**Provenance:** Artist's studio; Kerr-Xavier Roussel, L'Étang-la-Ville (France) – Given by Roussel to Bé de Waard, L'Étang-la-Ville – Georges Maratier, Paris – Galerie Barri-Lardy, Paris, 1970 – JPL Fine Arts, London, 1983 – Private collection, Florida – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 28 June 1989, lot 117 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris 18 Nov. 1989, lot 55 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris 16 June 1990, lot 70 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Hôtel des ventes, Rambouillet, 15 July 1990, p. 29 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Palais de l'Europe, Le Touquet, 11 Nov. 1990, lot 99 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris, 15 June 1991, lot 42 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** London, JPL, 1983, p. 28 (ill.).

**Description:** The artist's mother, wearing a dotted grey dress, is seen foreshortened in profile, against what appears to be the back of a canvas on an ochre stretcher outlined in orange. To the right, on the faded-red and beige wallpaper, hangs a small blue frame with Bonnard's Profile of Vuillard (D25). (JS)

#### IV-176 Half-Length Portrait of Madame Vuillard

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 20.5 × 15 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Art market, Geneva



IV-177

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 20 Dec. 1956, lot 102 (ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 8 July 1971, lot 45 (ill.) – Jan Krugier, Geneva – Sale, Espace Cardin, Paris, 18 Nov. 1972, lot 190 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 5 April 1978, lot 28, (ill.), bought in – Galerie Jan Krugier, Ditesheim et Cie, Geneva.

#### IV-177 Madame Vuillard with Yellow Bows

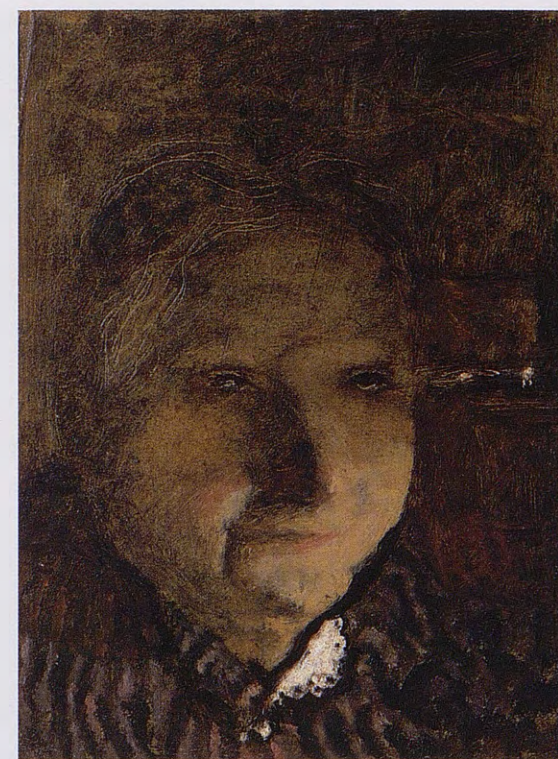
c. 1895-96  
Oil on cardboard, 36 × 29 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, New York

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris, 1945 – Private collection, New York.

**Exhibition:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 102 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Daniel 1984, p. 121, fig. 40.

**Description:** The artist's mother portrayed half-length, in a three-quarters profile, with her arms crossed. Daylight strikes the left side of her face and nose. Two orange ribbons stand out brightly on either side of her blouse. Blue and green floral wallpaper on the right. (JS)



IV-178

#### IV-178 Pierre Bonnard's Mother

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 22 × 16.5 cm  
Signed, upper right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Olivier Sainsère, Paris – Private collection, Paris – Galerie Schmit, Paris – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Vollard, 1897, no. 86 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 47 – Paris, Seligmann, 1936, no. 153 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 52 [*Portrait de femme vue de face, le visage éclairé par dessous*, c. 1897] – Paris, Schmit, 1991, no. 39 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 61, 83-84, 88 (ill.) – Schweicher 1955, pl. 14 – Daniel 1984, p. 123, fig. 41.

**Description:** Madame Bonnard in Rembrandtesque lighting. The sitter wears a striped grey and mauve housecoat, with a touch of white at the collar. Her lips supply the only pinkish accent in the entire composition; her hair is worked with the handle of the paintbrush. (JS)



IV-179

#### IV-179 Madame Vuillard Peeling Vegetables

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 24.5 × 22.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 18 May 1934, lot 105, 7,900 F – Alfred Daber, Paris – Galerie Berès, Paris, 1956 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Daber, 1947 – Paris, Berès, 1956 (not in cat.); and 1990, no. 116 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 70 (ill.) – *Arts*, no. 113, 2 May 1947, p. 1 (ill.).

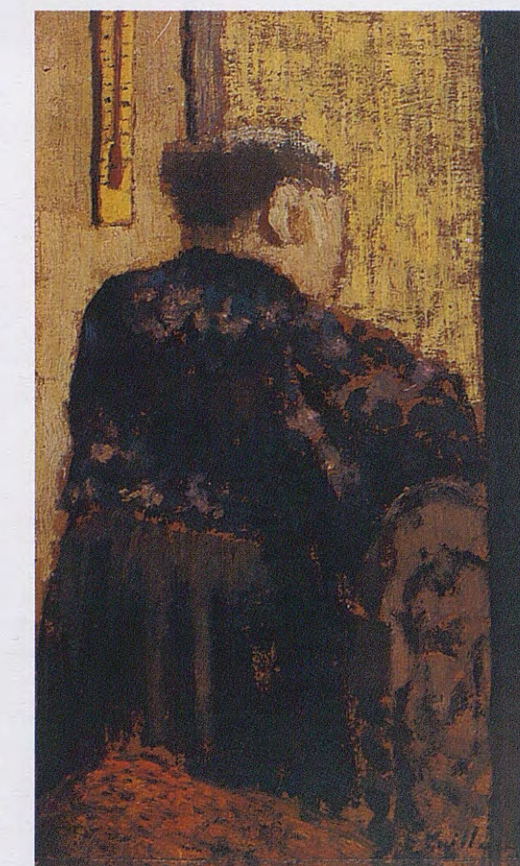
#### IV-180 The Thermometer

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 25 × 14 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris, c. 1944 – Galerie Georges Moos, Geneva – Sale, Christie's, London, 31 March 1981, lot 119 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

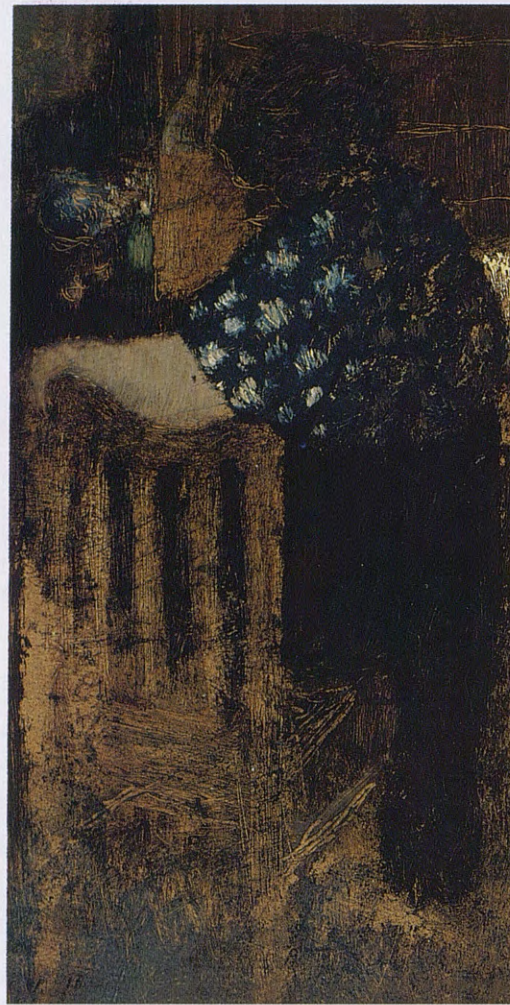
**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 36 (ill.) – Schweicher 1949, pp. 72-73.

**Description:** Clad in a blue blouse and grey skirt, Madame Vuillard faces towards a background of yellow light. The red liquid in a thermometer on the grey wall echoes this note of brightness. A chair with a grey back; black vertical stripe of a doorpost on the right. (AC)



IV-180





IV-181

# **IV-181** **Back View of a Woman with** **Elbow Propped on a Chair**

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 28 × 14.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private Collection, Canada

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris, c. 1960 – Galerie de la Présidence, Paris – Private collection, Montreal (Quebec).

**Exhibition:** Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1960-61, no. 737.



IV-182

# **IV-182** **The Music Cabinet**

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 32.5 × 19.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – C. S. Wadsworth Trust, New York – C. S. Wadsworth Trust sale, Sotheby's, New York, 11 Dec. 1948, lot 80 (ill.) – Ralph F. Colin, New York – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** New York, Knoedler, 1960, no. 9 (ill.).

**Description:** A woman in pearl grey, seen from the back facing a piece of furniture with legs. Mottled ochre and brown walls; garnet chair seat, at bottom left, below a bright yellow rectangle on the wall. (AC)



IV-183

# **IV-183** **Woman in a Shawl**

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 22.4 × 14 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Gimpel, London, c. 1958 – Sale, Christie's, London, 28 June 1982, lot 12 (col. ill.) – Jan Krugier, Geneva – Galerie Bellier, Paris – Private collection.



IV-184

# **IV-184** **The Chignon**

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 28 × 24.5 cm  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Gimpel, London – The Phillips Family Collection, 1958 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** London, Gimpel, 1956 – New York, Wildenstein, 1983, p. 88.

# **IV-185** **Madame Vuillard** **at the Dinner Table**

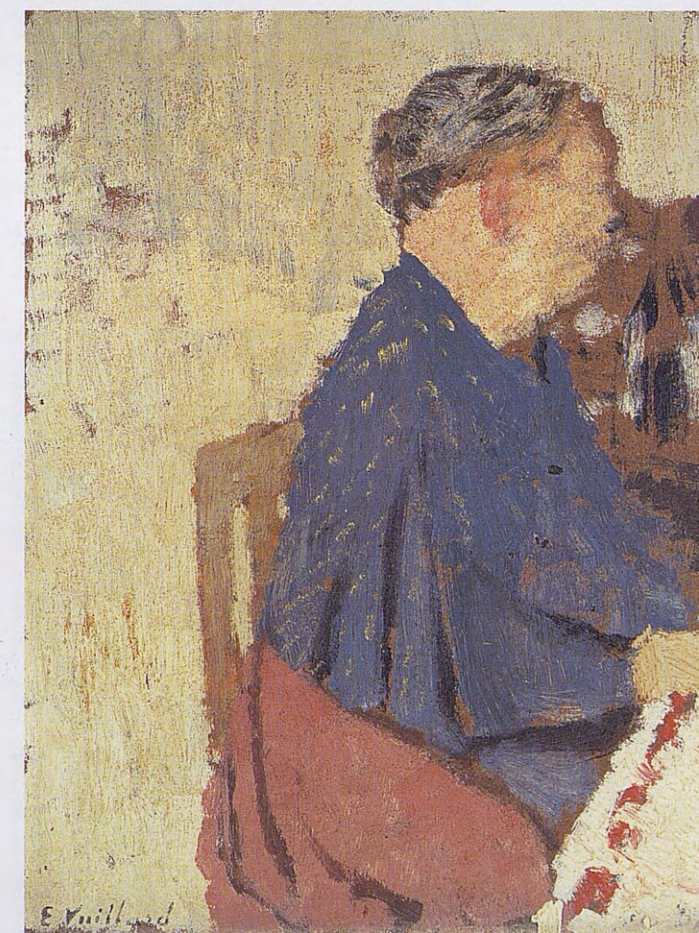
c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 24.1 × 19 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1944 – Sam Salz, New York – William Goetz, Los Angeles (California) – Goetz sale, Christie's, New York, 14 Nov. 1988, lot 19 (col. ill.) – Sale, Christie's, New York, 16 May 1990, lot 362 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Christie's, New York, 6 May 1998, lot 174 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** San Francisco, Legion of Honor, 1959, no. 63 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Preston 1971, fig. 9 – Daniel 1984, p. 101, fig. 31.

**Description:** A woman in profile dressed in a pale blue blouse with yellow dots on the back, and a faded



IV-185



IV-186

pink skirt, seated at a table covered with a vermillion-edged cloth. Her profile is merely adumbrated. Grey background shading into a lighter tone in the bottom half of the picture. (AC)

# **IV-186** **Madame Vuillard's Accounts**

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 43.5 × 51 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio [Le Carnet de la cuisinière or Les Deux Grand-mères, c. 1901] – Alex Maguy, Paris – Émile Roche – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Madame Vuillard, dressed in white and seated on the edge of her bed, to the left, is leafing through a bundle of papers on a garnet-red eider-down. To the right stands a woman in a red knitted bodice and black skirt, watching her. Yellow floral background with a small mirror framed in black. (JS)

The seated figure looking through papers is doubtless Madame Vuillard, but who is the woman standing next to her: Marie, or, as Jacques Salomon believed, Marie's mother-in-law, Madame Roussel, who had teamed up with Madame Vuillard at the time to bridge over the young couple's differences? Madame Vuillard, we know, shared her financial worries with her son. In a letter dated 5 October 1895, she writes: 'As for money, if it isn't not too much trouble for you to ask Rasetti for some, I would be very pleased to be able give some to the owner. Well, do what seems best, but don't fret over it'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Madame Vuillard to E. V., 5 Oct. 1895, Salomon archives.





IV-187

# IV-187 The Admonition

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 30.5 × 27 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris.

**Description:** A short, plump woman in a black dress and dark-blue blouse faces a young girl in a white dress, who is leaning on the back of a chair. Orange and red background. A window on the right, and a marmalade and white cat at the feet of the stout woman. (AC)

# IV-188 Madame Vuillard under the Green Ceiling Lamp

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on canvas, 27 × 21.5 cm  
Stamp 1, upper right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Jeanne Castel, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Description:** Seated at a large table that has yet to be cleared, a woman in a grey blouse looks towards



IV-188

the left, her profile reflecting the light; a large ceiling lamp hangs above her head. Red and black variegations on the grey striped wallpaper beneath the glazed portion of the partition. The tablecloth, plates and glass have a bluish tinge. A bouquet of carnations by the large bottle on the right. The light gives a golden glow to the apple on the plate to the left. (AC)

# IV-189 Lunch

c. 1895  
Oil on canvas, 32 × 39 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Janice H. Levin Foundation, New York



IV-189

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York, c. Jan. 1965 – Philip Jerome Levin and Janice H. Levin, New York – Janice H. Levin Foundation, New York, 2001.

**Exhibitions:** Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 31 – Los Angeles-San Francisco-Cleveland, 1965, no. 25 (ill.) – New York, Christie's, 1968, no. 36 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 68 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, p. 91.



IV-190

# IV-190 Woman Sweeping at 346 Rue Saint-Honoré

1895  
Oil on cardboard, 33 × 50 cm  
Signed, upper right: E Vuillard  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris, before 1909 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1932, no. 136 [*La Balayeuse*] – London, Rosenberg & Helft, 1937, no. 17 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 22 [*Femme balayant près d'un poêle*, c. 1892].

**Bibliography:** Bernard 1930, p. 26 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 51-52, 1948c, p. 37, pl. 17; and 1968, pp. 24, 26.

'*Femme Balayant près d'un Poêle*' ('Woman sweeping by a stove') belongs to roughly the same period: a chair in the foreground right;

on the left, the dark cylinder of a stove. The towel drying on the back of the chair and the canvas leaning against the wall lend character to a room that serves at once as kitchen, bathroom and studio. Notice the way a higher order presides over the scrupulously respected disorder and the strong handling of the vertical lines, cut off half-way up, of the cupboard and the doors in the background. A humble poetry reminiscent of François Coppée emanates from this canvas – the Coppée, I mean, who is most like Verlaine and who foreshadows Francis Jammes. 'How would a modern-day Steen have rendered this scene? One would see the dust swirl; a child would be busy filling the stove; the mistress of the house would be adding the last touches to her *toilette*, while a maidservant would be bringing in a letter through the half-open door. Vuillard simplifies the action, the clothing and the settings, as Verlaine would have done, only more so: no velvet, no furs,

no pearls, no smiles; all trace of wealth, of being comfortably off even, has vanished. Modestly attired in a striped jacket, the housekeeper silhouetted against the walls lacks youth; even the broom looks worn out; the towel is frayed. Yet this impression is created without any appeal to sentimentality or to the kind of moral insights that Diderot encouraged in Greuze. Nor is there any sadness. It is of Le Nain, of Chardin, of Corot that we are reminded: a Chardin detached from his sheens and polish, a less austere Le Nain, a homely Corot caught up since childhood in a tangle of habits and small pleasures. The composition, "those pale and delicate colours" that Edmond de Goncourt admired in Degas's *Washerwomen*, put us in mind of the latter; but the woman who is sweeping here is not a hired model; she is *at home*, beyond resignation, almost happy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 51-52.



# IV-191

## Madame Vuillard at Tante Saurel's Bedside

1895 (?)

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 20.3 × 26.6 cm

Signed, lower left: *ev* (does not appear in Bernheim's photograph of 1910)

Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 9246), 31 March 1899, 200 F – Jack Aghion, Paris, 1899 – Aghion sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 29 March 1918, lot 27 (ill.) – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 21166), 1,500 F – Alex Reid, Glasgow, 23 Feb. 1920 – Georges Bernheim, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 23532), 27 Sept. 1923 – Alfred Bernheim, Paris, 2 Jan. 1924 – Daniel Malingue, Paris – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Mrs Edward G. Robinson, Beverly Hills (California), 1976 – Sale, Christie's, New York, 6 Nov. 1979, lot 23 (col. ill.) – Collection Moshe and Sara Mayer, Geneva – Private collection, Switzerland.



IV-191

**Exhibitions:** London, Tooth & Sons, May-June 1969, no. 5 (ill.); and 1972, no. 4 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, pp. 189-192, fig. 76 – Tel Aviv 1999, pp. 80, 81 (col. ill.).

# IV-192

## The Cook, Madame Vuillard Peeling Potatoes

1896-97

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 38.7 × 31.3 cm

Signed, upper left: *E. Vuillard*

Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki (Japan)

**Provenance:** Eugène Blot, Paris – Blot sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 10 May 1906, lot 87 [*La Cuisinière*] – Armand Parent, for 700 F – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 21603), c. 1919, 4,500 F – Magosaburo Ohara, Japan, 19 Nov. 1921, 15,000 F – Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, 1922; stolen on 28 Nov. 1970; returned in March 1972.

**Exhibitions:** Osaka, Daimaru, 1967, no. 7 – Gifu Museum of Fine Arts, 1993, no. 180, p. 103 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Kurashiki 1970, col. ill.; and [n. d.] no. 26 (ill.).

**Description:** Two oil lamps with conical shades stand on a piece of furniture in the foreground left; the bigger of the two is lit and vividly illuminates the floral wallpaper on the partition, as well as casting its light further back on the figure in the kitchen on the right. (JS)



IV-192



IV-193

# IV-193

## Madame Vuillard at the Dinner Table, 342 Rue Saint-Honoré

1896-97

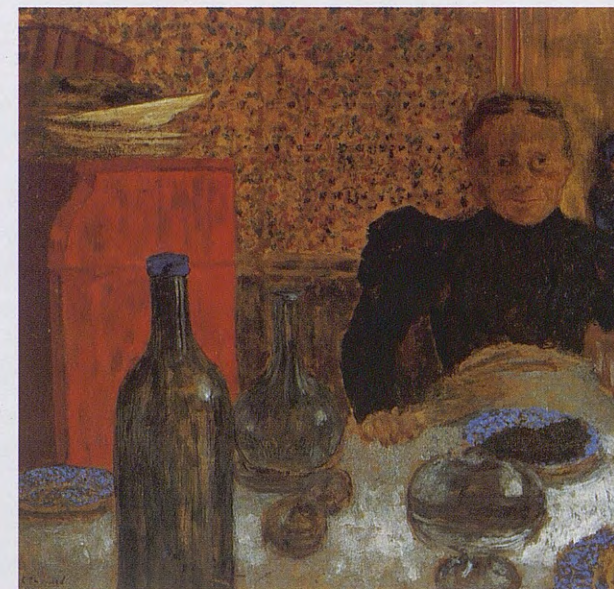
Pastel on paper, 24 × 27 cm

Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Claude Roger-Marx, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** The artist's mother in a dark garment is seated at the centre of the picture, in front of an open door. The laid table fills the entire foreground; on the left, a green bottle and a carafe stand out against the orange tone of a piece of furniture. A yellow-green floral paper on the wall. (JS)



IV-194

# IV-194

## Madame Vuillard at Table

1896-97

Oil on cardboard, 45.7 × 48.7 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Captain Richard A. Peto, Isle of Wight (Great Britain), 1946; Mrs Rosemary Peto, London – Sale, Christie's, London, 29 June 1981, lot 25 (col. ill.) – Sale, Christie's, New York, 19 Nov. 1986, lot 21 (col. ill.) – William J. Levy, Washington D.C. – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** London, Tooth & Sons, 1946, no. 15 – Great Britain, travelling exhib., 1947-48, no. 25 – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 67

– Plymouth, City Museum, 1960, no. 87 – London, Tooth & Sons, April-May 1969, no. 21 (ill.) – Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90.

**Description:** A woman in black seen against the light at a table covered with blue plates and fruit. A green bottle with a blue seal stands out against the red sideboard on the left, on which a few yellow plates have been set. A mottled ochre background. (AC)

# IV-195

## Sauceboat and Napkin Rings

c. 1896-97

Oil on cardboard, 21 × 20 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Dedicated on rear: *E. Vuillard à*

*K.X. Roussel, Etang-la-Ville, S-et-O*

Art market, Stuttgart (Germany)

**Provenance:** Kerr-Xavier Roussel, L'Étang-la-Ville (France) – Kunsthaus Bühler, Stuttgart.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 195 [*La Saucière*] – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 32 (ill.) – Stuttgart, Kunsthaus Bühler, 1996, p. 12 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A closely knit, decorative composition on a muted red tablecloth, consisting of rolled-up napkins in red rings, a sauceboat, a lamp with a twisted green stem and a crystal glass. (AC)



IV-195





IV-196

#### IV-196 Objects under a Lamp

c. 1896-97  
Oil on cardboard, 11 × 15 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

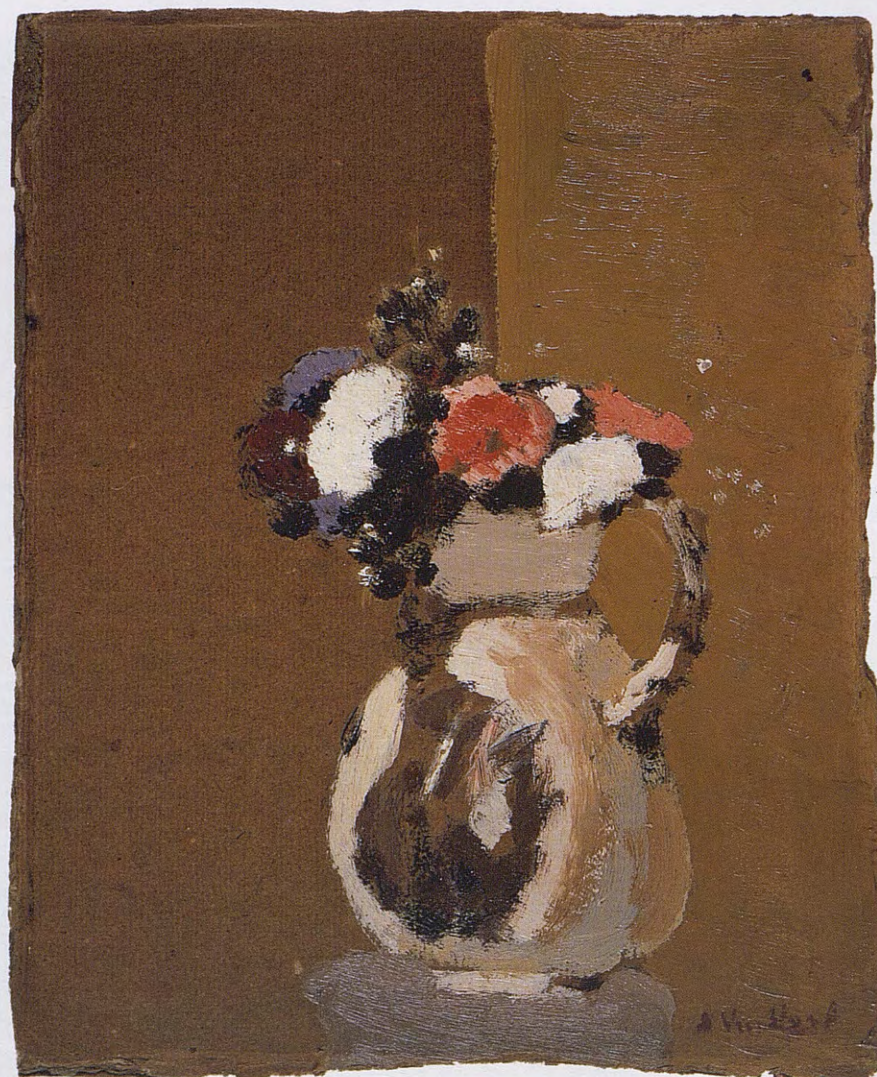
**Description:** On a red tablecloth stand several plates, a bonbonnière, a salt cellar, and a lamp with a blue base, its shade is cropped by the edge of this studied arrangement. (AC)

In this elevated view of objects laid out on a table, Vuillard appears to have opted for a random framing, somewhat in the manner of what Bonnard was doing around the same time. But, in fact, a preparatory drawing (see ill.) shows that the position of all the objects in the composition had been carefully worked out. And with Vuillard, as we know, a sketch is always a statement of intention. The con-



E. V., preparatory sketch for *Objects under a Lamp*, graphite on brown paper, 11 × 13.9 cm. Private collection.

trast between the deep-blue base of the oil lamp and the dark red of the tablecloth is superb.



IV-197

#### IV-197 The White Jug

c. 1896 (?)  
Oil on cardboard, 19.5 × 15.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 16726), 5 July 1908, 50 F – Félix Fénéon, Paris, 7 July 1908, 100 F – Sale, Salons du Trianon-Palace, Versailles, 26 Nov. 1967, lot 123 (ill.) – Paul Kantor, Beverly Hills (California) – Jerome K. Ohrbach, United States – Ohrbach sale, Sotheby's, New York, 13 Nov. 1990, lot 16 (col. ill.) – Private collection – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 4 Nov. 1993, lot 154 (col. ill.) – Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection, 1994.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1907, no. 90.



IV-198

#### IV-198 Nude on a Blanket with a Red Floral Pattern

c. 1888  
Oil on paper, mounted on hardboard, 64.1 × 80.7 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Japan

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Girard, Paris – Galerie du Cirque, Paris – Private collection, Paris – Galerie Bellier, Paris, 1980 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 11 Nov. 1999, lot 240 (col. ill.), bought in – Private collection, Japan.

**Exhibition:** Asnières, Centre administratif, 1966, no. 4 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** *The Connoisseur* 145, no. 586, May 1960, p. 269 (ill.).

**Description:** A model posing on a red couch. Brown background; a dark curtain on the left hangs over one side of a mirror in a pale frame reflecting the yellow wall opposite. The lower left is unfinished. (JS)

The dating of this nude has caused some perplexity: the scholars involved with this cat-



IV-200



IV-199

*alogue raisonné* have offered dates ranging from 1895 to 1905. The cramped nature of the bedroom studio depicted here suggests the rue de Miromesnil attic where Vuillard worked between 1890 and 1891. Several drawings of nudes executed in an academic style survive from the time when Vuillard frequented the studios of Fernand Cormon and William Bouguereau. The present composition might be defined as a late-Romantic sketch in the style of Léon Cogniet or of Amaury-Duval on one of his Delacroix days. Doubtless an early nude, it is somewhat anomalous compared to the more Synthetist nudes Vuillard was to paint at a later date.

#### IV-199 Nude Reclining on a Rug

c. 1894-95  
Oil on canvas, 44 × 53 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alex Maguy, Paris, c. 1964 – Mrs Neville Blond, Great Britain – Sale,

Christie's, London, 24 June 1986, lot 113 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** The model, her head on a grey-blue pillow, reclines on a sort of mauve bedspread. Her shadowy face is of the same colour. Further back in the composition, a purple red dress and two white spots suggest a hat on a low chest or table. On the left is a pale rectangular canvas. The paint throughout is extremely thin, handled almost like watercolours. Nearly everywhere the primer shows through, not least in the nude figure's lighter-coloured areas. (AC)

#### IV-200 Study of a Reclining Nude

c. 1894-95  
Oil and red chalk on cardboard, 25.8 × 65.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 28 Nov. 1967, lot 91 (ill.) – Dina Vierny, Paris – Galerie d'Art Moderne, Basle (Switzerland), c. 1978 – A. W. Jann, Basle – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 25 Nov. 1987, lot XX (col. ill.) – Sale, Christie's, London, 1 Dec. 1992, no. 119 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

#### IV-201 Nude Seated by a Stove

c. 1894  
Oil on canvas, 38.5 × 45.7 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Oscar Homolka – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 Dec. 1971, lot 9 (ill.) – Dr. W. Eisenveiss, Switzerland – Sale, Christie's, London, 30 March 1981, lot 31 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.



IV-201





IV-202

## IV-202 The Kitchen

1896-97  
Oil on cardboard, 17.3 × 33.7 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven (Connecticut), Philip L. Goodwin, B.A. 1907, Collection; Gift of James L. Goodwin, Henry Sage Goodwin, and Richmond L. Brown, Acc. 1958.21

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Sam Salz, New York, 1939 – Private collection, Paris – Alfred Daber, Paris – Philip L. Goodwin, New York, 1950; Philip L. Goodwin Collection – Gift from

James L. Goodwin, Henry Sage Goodwin and Richmond L. Brown to Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 25 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 34 – Paris, Daber, 1947 – New Haven, Yale, 1956, no. 126 (ill.) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 3 (ill.) – New Haven, Yale, 1980, no. 2 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 44 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Schweicher 1949, p. 91 – *Life*, 28 May 1956, p. 71 (col. ill.) – *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*, April 1959, pp. 30 (ill.), 50 – Forster-Hahn 1968, pp. 29-30, pl. 22 – Kozloff 1971, p. 66 – Neilson 1972, no. 85 (ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 71 – Daniel 1984, p. 258, fig. 95 – Easton 1989, p. 65 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, p. 74 (ill.).



IV-203



IV-204

**Description:** The top of a cooker enamelled in a pattern of small blue and white squares, with an oil lamp standing at the centre. A preserving-pan hangs on the wall on the upper right. (JS)

## IV-203 Still Life with Soup Tureen

1896-97  
Oil on cardboard, 22.5 × 22.5 cm  
Signed, lower centre: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Paul Desmarais, Paris, 1898 – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Vollard, 1897, no. 83.

## IV-204 Breakfast at the Ransons'

1897  
Oil on cardboard, 31.5 × 21 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Schmit, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Schmit, 1973, no. 63 (col. ill.).

## IV-205 Woman Seated in a Dark Room

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on hardboard, 36.7 × 26.3 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Montréal (Quebec), purchased with Museum campaign funds 1988-93, Inv. 296-2001.

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Gift to Ralph F. Colin, New York, 1951 – Colin sale, Christie's, New York, 10 May 1995, lot 17 (col. ill.) – Galerie Bellier, Paris – Private collection – Purchased by the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Montréal, 2001.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Knoedler, 1960, no. 10 (ill.) – Florence, 1998, no. 58, p. 97 (col. ill.), and Montreal, 1998, no. 183, p. 46 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Cogeval, exhib. cat. 1998, Florence, pp. 188-189, and Montreal, p. 121.

**Description:** A woman in a mottled beige dress seated in profile, turned to a window framed by a bright carmine curtain. The room is dark, and its furnishing indistinct. Her yellow collar shines brightly. A dark-green object looms against the light before the window. (AC)

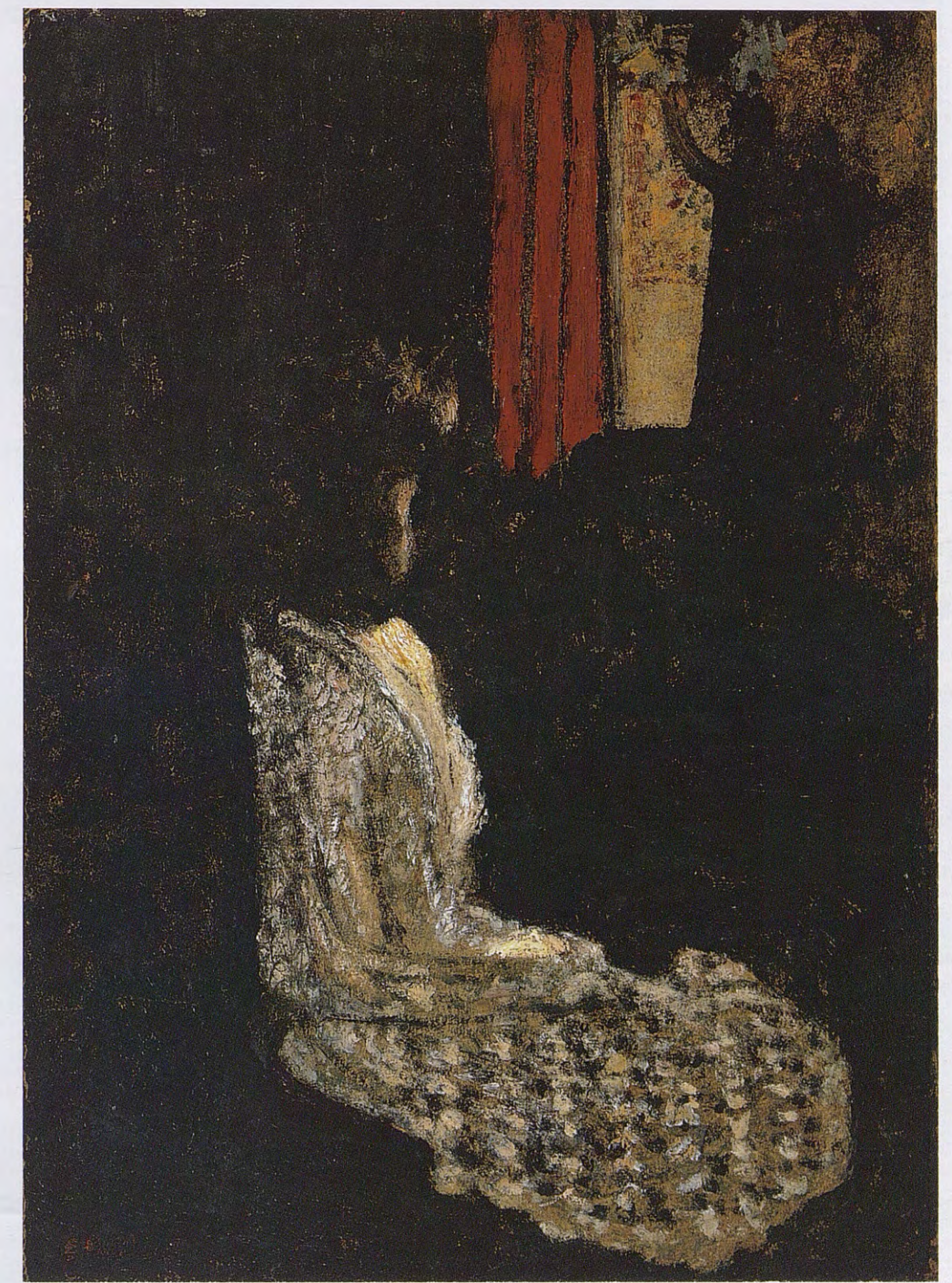
This is one of Vuillard's favourite subjects, a woman in a contemplative pose in a dark interior whose furnishings we hardly make out. She faces the window – the one source of light in the composition – and a summarily sketched tree is starkly outlined behind it. This is almost certainly a portrayal of the artist's sister Marie, forlorn in the family apartment after her husband Kerr-Xavier Roussel moved out (1895). The picture's vaguely mysterious mood is enhanced by the way the figure gradually looms out of the darkness and by the somewhat illegible quality of the space, which is just barely indicated by a few touches of colour (the mottled dress, the red curtain, the vague green leaf on the stylised tree). It seems to have less of a connection with Dutch painting, therefore, than with the work of Odilon Redon. A depiction of solitude, this *Woman Seated in a Dark Room* – a reassuringly familiar phantom in the inky darkness – should be seen in conjunction with some of Redon's inspired 'noirs' (see ill.), with their figures shown in profile in the foreground,



Odilon Redon, *Profile of a Woman in Shadow*, c. 1895, charcoal. The Art Institute of Chicago.

whilst the background – sometimes glimpsed through a window – serves as a setting for mysterious explosions of colour or weird twilight apparitions. The image could almost be a sensation transcribed from memory, and it is worth remembering that, in his years of apprenticeship, Vuillard once observed: 'If one's mental equipment is unable to grasp these relations, to retain them for a brief moment and, like a sleepwalker, to transfer them onto paper or canvas, [it is] pointless to waste one's time!'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 22 Nov 1888, I.1, fol. 12v.



IV-205





IV-206

#### IV-206 Lady in Red

c. 1895-99  
Oil on cardboard, 20.4 × 20.4 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris – George N. Richard, New York – N. Richard sale, Christie's, New York, 14 Nov. 1989, lot 20 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 23 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 29 – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 62 – London, Wildenstein, June 1948, no. 10 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 15 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 166.

**Description:** A woman in a full, bright red dress, shown in profile on the left, is seated on a brownish-red divan and seen against a greyish-beige wall with a skirting board and a dark doorway on the right. (JS)



IV-207

#### IV-207 In Darkness

c. 1895  
Oil on canvas, 21.5 × 16.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Syracuse University Art Collection,  
Syracuse (New York), 1966.243

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 Dec. 1965, lot 29 (ill.) – Theodore Newhouse – Newhouse gift to Syracuse University Art Collection, Syracuse, 1966.

**Exhibition:** Rochester, Memorial Art Gallery, 1984, no. 75 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, pp. 61-62.

**Description:** A young woman in black is seated in the darkness by a table, the cloth of which is barely visible. A beam of light filters in to the sitter's face through an opening on the right. The dark background is dotted with yellow. This is one of the artist's first experiments at rendering the kind of night-time impression of which he was always extremely fond. (AC)



IV-208

#### IV-208 Woman Sewing by an Open Window

1895  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on a cradled panel, 32.1 × 36.5 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right:  
*E. Vuillard 95*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
(Massachusetts), 48.612

**Provenance:** Fernand Hayem, Paris, 1896 – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 11331), 7 March 1901 – Jos Hessel, Paris, 7 March 1901, 550 F – Emile Staub, Männedorf (Zurich, Switzerland) – Wildenstein, New York, c. 1941 – John T. Spaulding, Boston, 1941 – Bequest of John T. Spaulding, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1948.

**Exhibitions:** Zurich, Kunsthau, 1932, no. 131 [*Intérieur, couseuse*, 1895] – Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1949, pp. 89-90 (ill.) – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101 (ill.) – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 23 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 36 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 57 (ill., *Près de la fenêtre*) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 33 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90 (not in cat.).

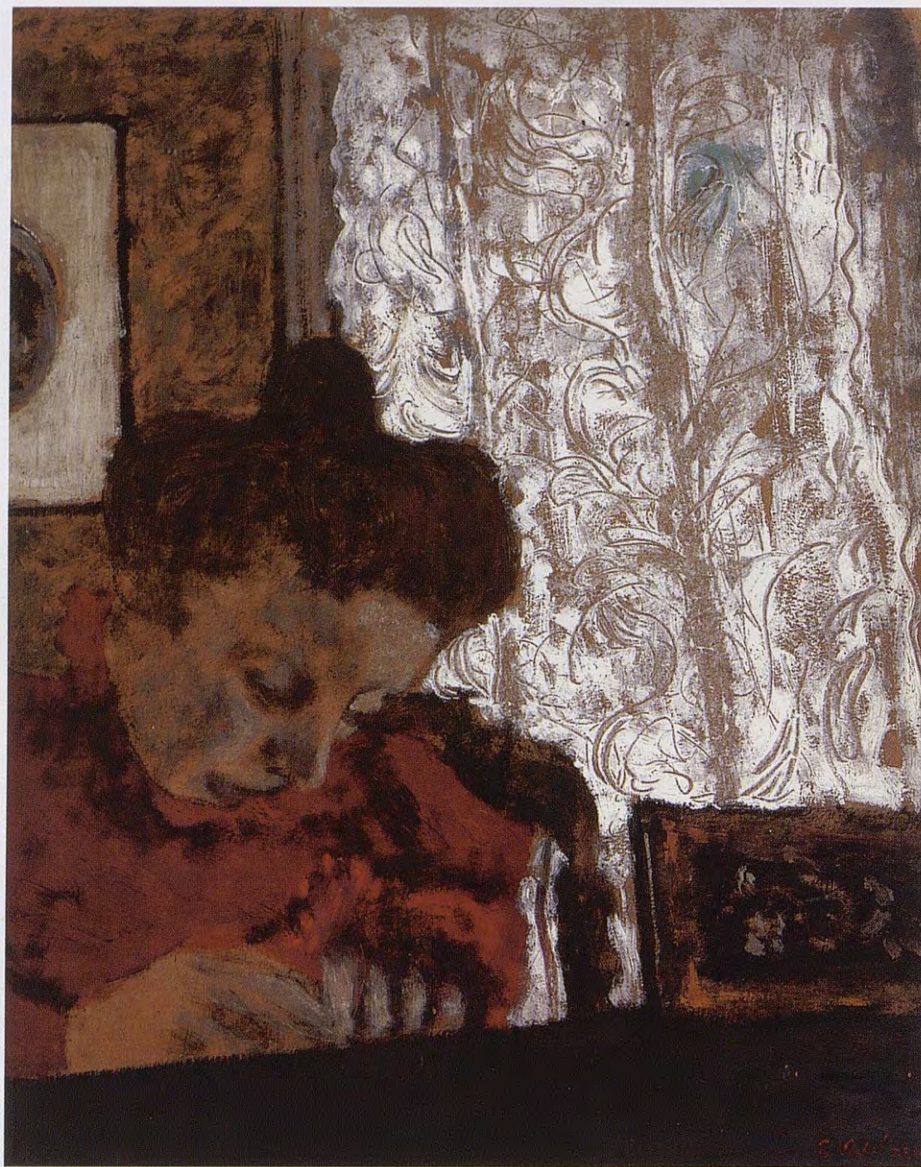
**Bibliography:** Georges 1982, p. 77 – Daniel 1984, pp. 207, 210, fig. 70 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 66 (col. ill.).

**Description:** Marie Roussel is seated left, bent over her sewing, her nape brightly illuminated by the daylight that streams in through an open window over-

looking trees beyond the diamond pattern of a wooden trellis. (JS)

The detail of the sitter's daintily bowed neck brings to mind certain models of the Italian Renaissance (see VI-61, *The Nape of Misia's Neck*). The golden light filtering through the lattice on the window lights up the delicate blue squares of her dress. The artist yet again depicts Marie sewing, only this time forever fixed as an archetypal figure of solitude (in 1895, the year this was painted, she experienced the first major difficulties of married life).





IV-209

**IV-209**  
**Marie Roussel**  
**Embroidering, Seen against**  
**the Light**

c. 1895  
 Oil on cardboard, 37 × 29 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower right  
 Private collection, The Netherlands

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – E. J. Van Wisselingh, Amsterdam – B. Meijer, Wassenaar (The Netherlands) – Private collection, The Netherlands.

**Exhibitions:** Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 26 (ill., *Marie Vuillard écrivant*, c. 1893) – Paris, Marcel Guiot, 1960, no. 24 (ill.) – Zurich, 1964, no. 137.

**Bibliography:** *Emporium* 131, no. 782, Feb. 1960, p. 53 (ill.) – Salomon 1961, p. 39 (ill.) – Russoli

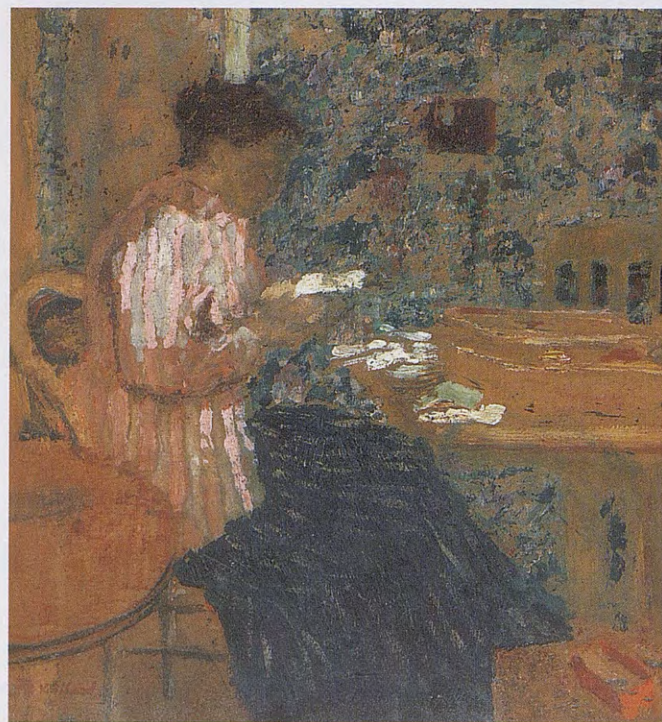
1966, col. pl. 17, col. ill. on cover – Barilli 1967c, p. 125 (col. ill.) – Dugdale 1967a, col. pl. 4 – Negri 1970, p. 22, col. pl. 40 – Russoli and Martini 1973, col. pl. 17, col. ill. on cover – Daniel 1984, p. 77, fig. 20.

Perplexingly, there has been some confusion concerning the iconography of this picture, which has been exhibited under the title *Marie Writing* when it is perfectly clear that Marie is embroidering and has a sewing box at her side. The effect of the light filtering through the curtain is particularly successful. Paradoxically, the curtain's gossamer texture is rendered by means of a white impasto in which the artist has scored fine intersecting curved lines with the handle of his brush. Throughout 1895, Vuillard painted pictures of his sister sewing and embroidering, always desperately lonely after the departure of Kerr-Xavier Roussel.

**IV-210**  
**Woman Reading**

c. 1895  
 Oil on cardboard, 40 × 31.5 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower left  
 Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Castellucho, Paris – Mrs John Barry Ryan, New York, until 1995 – Current whereabouts unknown.



IV-210



IV-211

**IV-211**  
**Family Evening**

1895  
 Oil on canvas, 48 × 65 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower left  
 Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio [*Le Soir dans la salle à manger*] – De Hauke, Paris – Knoedler, New York – Doris Warner Vidor, New York – Richard L. Feigen, New York – Josefowitz collection – Private collection, 1984 – Sale Christie's, New York, 7 May 2002, lot 10 (col. ill.).

**Exhibitions:** New York, Seligmann, 1930, no. 23 [*La Salle à manger*, 1900] – Stockholm, Galerie d'Art Latin, 1948, no. 6 [*Quatre personnages le soir*, 1898] – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 181 [dated 1905] – Pittsburgh, Carnegie, 1951, no. 126 (ill.) – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964,

no. 10 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 69 (col. ill., *The Roussel Family at Dinner*).

**Bibliography:** Preston 1971, fig. 3 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 138-142, fig. 46 – Easton 1989, p. 97 – Makarius 1989, pp. 21, 46-47 (col. ill.) – Ellridge 1993, pp. 102-103 (col. ill.) – Sidlauskas 1997, p. 109, fig. 25.

The more perspicacious among Vuillard scholars have intuitively sensed the dramatic nature of this composition, one of the artist's most autobiographical works. 'The room and the people in it seem to be in the grip of that diffuse feeling of uneasiness that Symbolist poets usually associate with the coming of twilight,' writes Ciaffa.<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Easton, meanwhile, suggests: 'With its garish artificial light casting Roussel and his friend into murky shadows, *The Roussel*

*Family at Dinner* hints... that things were not all that they should have been in the Roussel household.' Thanks to certain documents in the Salomon archives we can reconstruct the genesis of this painting and assess the true nature of the dramatic confession it entails. After the loss of Marie's child on 13 December 1894, the young couple's relationship began to unravel. In his 'autobiographical notes', Vuillard describes the year 1895 as one of 'complications in the Roussel household'.<sup>2</sup> In fact, from the beginning of 1891, Roussel had been carrying on a passionate liaison with France Ranson's sister, Germaine. By the spring of 1895, Roussel's repeated absences and bad temper were becoming a burden for the Vuillards. In his Journal entry for 19 April 1895, Vuillard notes: 'Return of Kerr from



his two-day escapade'.<sup>3</sup> A month later, he confesses to feeling shame over his indulgence towards his brother-in-law: 'Lunch, Kerr in calm good spirits. This exasperates me, but I am so weary, so craven, that I adapt to the circumstances, as required. I keep everything in, except a vague annoyance'.<sup>4</sup> By July 1895, however, matters had deteriorated so badly that Roussel left the family home. Vuillard was later to recall (again in his 'autobiographical notes'): 'Departure of Kerr 16 July return place Dauphine in October'.<sup>5</sup> The address on the place Dauphine to which Vuillard alludes was the home of Roussel's mother and was to be the scene of yet another of Vuillard's more dramatic compositions, *Married Life* (IV-217). The scandal had by now attained such proportions that the family's close friends and acquaintances decided to step in. One of Vuillard and Roussel's oldest mutual friends, the deeply religious Paul Percheron (see ill.), wrote to Vuillard in July 1895: 'As you know, I saw your good moth-



E. V., Paul Percheron and his wife at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, 1897, photograph. Private collection.

er who told me it might help if I were to write to miserable old Kerr; I daren't believe her; but since we mustn't spare any effort to enlighten him and give him the courage to stand up to himself, I intend to write to him as soon as you have replied to this letter. Should I write to him at Créteil, letting him know that I'm aware of his flight, and urge him tactfully to ask God for strength to do the right thing? – Or would it be better if I wrote to him at the rue Saint-

Honoré (and you would forward the letter to Créteil), seeming to know nothing and asking him to call on me at Sarcelles where I shall be staying during the months of August and September; this will be news to him as he believes I am to leave soon. As you know so much more about this matter than I do, be good enough to help me resolve this quandary'.<sup>6</sup>

Kerr-Xavier Roussel's artless charm – not to mention his astounding aplomb – meant that, for a time, he was able to convince his friends and family to put up with the situation. Many years later, in his memoir *Peints à leur tour*, Thadée Natanson alluded indirectly to the 'minor disappointments of the early days' of the Roussels' marriage<sup>7</sup> and gave a shrewd assessment of the propensity to play the Don Juan that lay at the bottom of Kerr-Xavier Roussel's character. 'What Kerr-Xavier Roussel masters best is the art of getting people to accept his most unconventional views and behaviour – by dint, it would seem, of appearing to find them quite natural. So natural that not only do his friends and relatives blindly accept whatever he undertakes to foist on them, they even seem to consider that nothing he does can ever be totally unforgivable. But it is not just women who love Don Juan. The real Don Juan is the person whom no one can resist – neither the little girl nor the greybeard, neither brother nor friend – and whom everyone is delighted to dine with, even the Commander. Don Juan does as he likes; his secret and the feather in his cap is that he gets people to accept it'.<sup>8</sup> Eventually, however, the Ransons began to show signs of being exasperated. Judging by a letter from Paul Ranson to Vuillard in September 1895, the time for knowing silences was plainly over: '*Mon cher ami*, it's agreed then, Friday morning at half-past ten, the Salon Carré at the Louvre, we'll be able to talk; one large, difficult issue remains to be explained, yet there must be a way out of such a cruel, such a false and, in a sense, such a ridiculous situation. But we'll find it easier to put our thoughts into words face to face. Yours ever, your friend, P. Ranson'.<sup>9</sup> In October 1895, Vuillard was sent to Nancy for a short stretch of military service.

On 5 October his mother informed him: 'I saw Madame Ranson the day of your departure. She came to place herself at our disposal to do whatever seems best to us, but Marie will write to you to tell you more tomorrow, although there are no new developments in the situation save small matters of detail'.<sup>10</sup> As egocentric as ever, Roussel considered it quite normal to go on living with his in-laws while carrying on an affair, by now quite openly, with his mistress. The situation was becoming so poisonous that Paul Ranson's wife, France – the 'Light' of the Nabi 'Temple' – broke off relations with her sister Germaine and let it be known that she wished never to set eyes on Roussel again (see IV-215 note 5). Marie reported this development to Vuillard in a letter dated October 6:

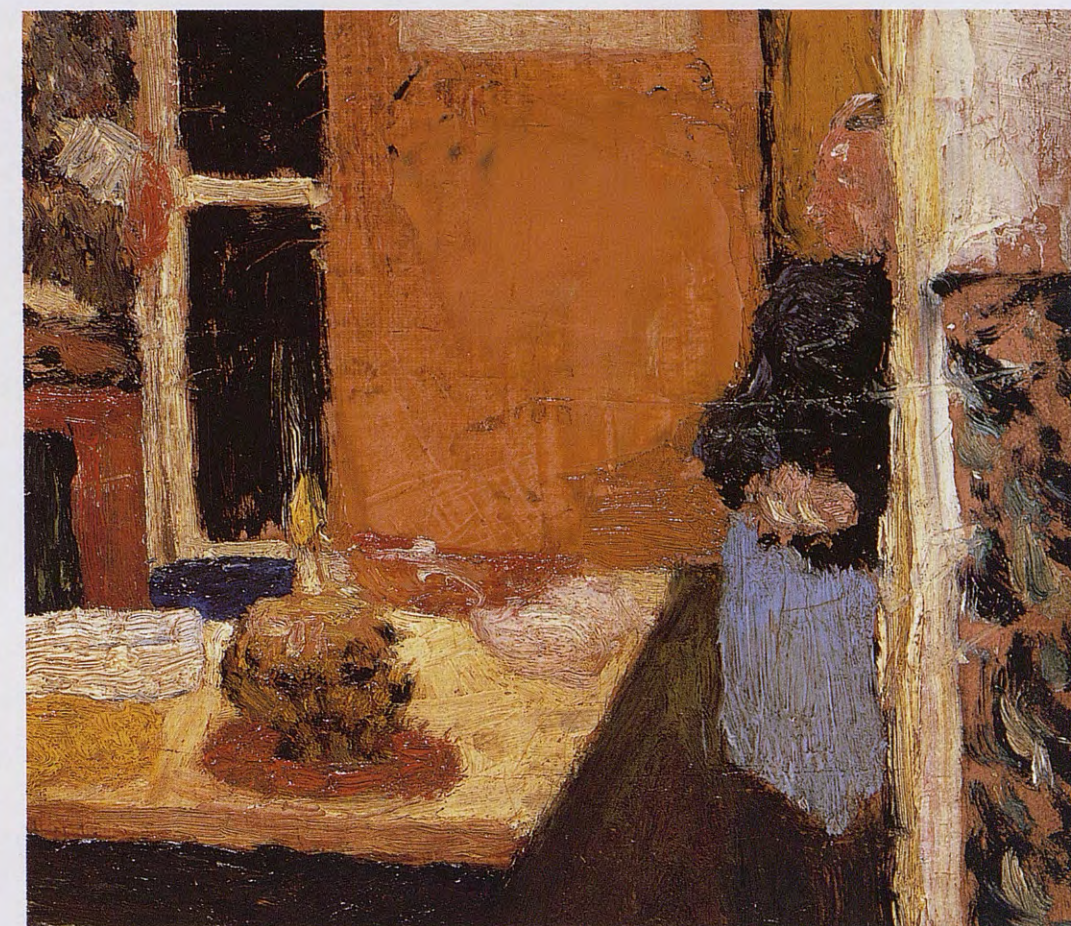
'My dear Édouard, I'm writing to you from Kerr's studio in dismal weather: it's pouring with rain and quite a contrast with the fine weather last Sunday. I lunched here and intend to stay for dinner; I believe Kerr eats better when I have my meals with him. Being alone makes him very unhappy I believe and although I told him what to expect, he persists in not wanting to do the reasonable thing, he has an idea, but it's impossible to know what it is, I told him everything about what had happened between G[ermaine] and her sister, he replied that he had foreseen it would end up like this, but not a word concerning the idea that preys on his mind. Ever since my telling him everything he's been somewhat less affectionate, I think his self-esteem in particular has taken a big knock, and he's peeved that the Ransons are taking our side and dropping him, his friends too by the way. Yesterday evening Frédéric Charles Percheron came to dinner and Henry as well. I did everything I could to get Kerr to come, to no avail. I saw Madame Ranson yesterday, naturally we again discussed the same topic, asking ourselves what is to be done and concluding by saying that one has to be patient, anyhow it's almost always the same thing. As for you, you aren't having much fun, but at least you're with your friends... Your little sister who loves you fondly. Marie'.<sup>11</sup>

The crisis appears to have come to a head in the autumn of 1895, with a confrontation between the two families. The *Large Interior with Six Figures* (IV-215) in Zurich appears to be the most explicit record of that event.

At this juncture, Madame Vuillard decided to save the Roussels' marriage by taking things into her own hands. In two letters, dated 12 and 15 October, she informed her son that she had decided to move to a neighbouring apartment in the hope of goading Marie into setting up an adult and responsible household with Kerr-Xavier Roussel elsewhere: 'As for Kerr, he's as stubborn as ever, Mimi still brings him his meals and sometimes shares them with him... I think I've found a small apartment right next door at no. 342, giving onto the Ladourette's garden, which won't change things much for us. I'll have to see the landlord's agent about terminating the lease. All this is at the planning stage. It's small but the rent is only 850 francs. The difference makes it worth putting up with the inconvenience and Mimi won't be staying with us'.<sup>12</sup>

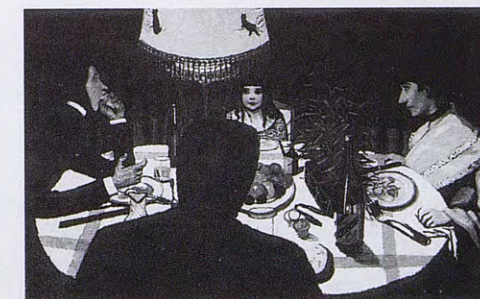
'Things are going better and better for Mimi and I believe that my decision to move is going to make the young couple's situation perfectly normal. I've rented next door and our flat is about to be let. I shall have the answer this evening but have every reason to believe it will be favourable... Mimi will write to you one of these days, she is very busy and dines with Kerr almost every evening. She even spent the night there twice. She's satisfied at last'.<sup>13</sup> By the end of 1895, Roussel and Germaine having decided to see less of each other, the family crisis appeared to be gradually subsiding.

The dramatic composition of *Family Evening* smacks of Symbolist theatre. The ceiling lamp is unlit; the light comes instead from the side, as in *Interior, Mystery* (IV-218). Cast by an oil lamp on the sideboard to the right, its luminous halo reveals patches of yellow, blue and gold on the right, while shadows and dark brown tints fill the rest of the room. Frédéric Henry is recognizable on the left, and Kerr-Xavier Roussel as the silhouette in the foreground, his



Détail du IV-211

dejected posture eloquently expressing his saturnine disposition and obstinate disinclination to speak. The arrangement of the



Paul Vallotton, *Dinner by Lamplight*, 1899, oil on wood. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

figures foreshadows Paul Vallotton's somewhat grotesque *Dinner by Lamplight* (see ill.), where the Swiss member of the Nabi group depicts his own silhouette in the centre, surrounded by Gabrielle Rodrigues and her two children, whose features he exaggerates wildly. In Vuillard's composition, the heightened distance between Marie, seated at the far end of the dinner table, and Roussel takes on a poignant significance. Madame Vuillard appears in the doorway

on the far right; sensing the strained atmosphere in the room, she hesitates to enter. The windows are rendered as opaque black rectangles precluding any possibility of escape. Vuillard was never again to paint such a disturbing, claustrophobic scene, nor one so replete with Ibsenesque pessimism. By suggesting to his best friend that he marry his sister, he had in a manner of speaking lit the fuse of a time bomb. Here he sedulously depicts, not without a touch of perversity, the fall-out from its explosion.

<sup>1</sup> Ciaffa 1985, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> E. V., *Journal*, II, 2, fol. 13v (11–12 Nov. 1908).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 2, fol. 55v.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 May 1895, I, 2, fol. 56v.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 11–12 Nov. 1908, II, 2, fol. 14r.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Paul Percheron to Vuillard, Salomon archives.

<sup>7</sup> Natanson 1948, p. 351.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 347.

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Paul Ranson to Vuillard, Salomon archives.

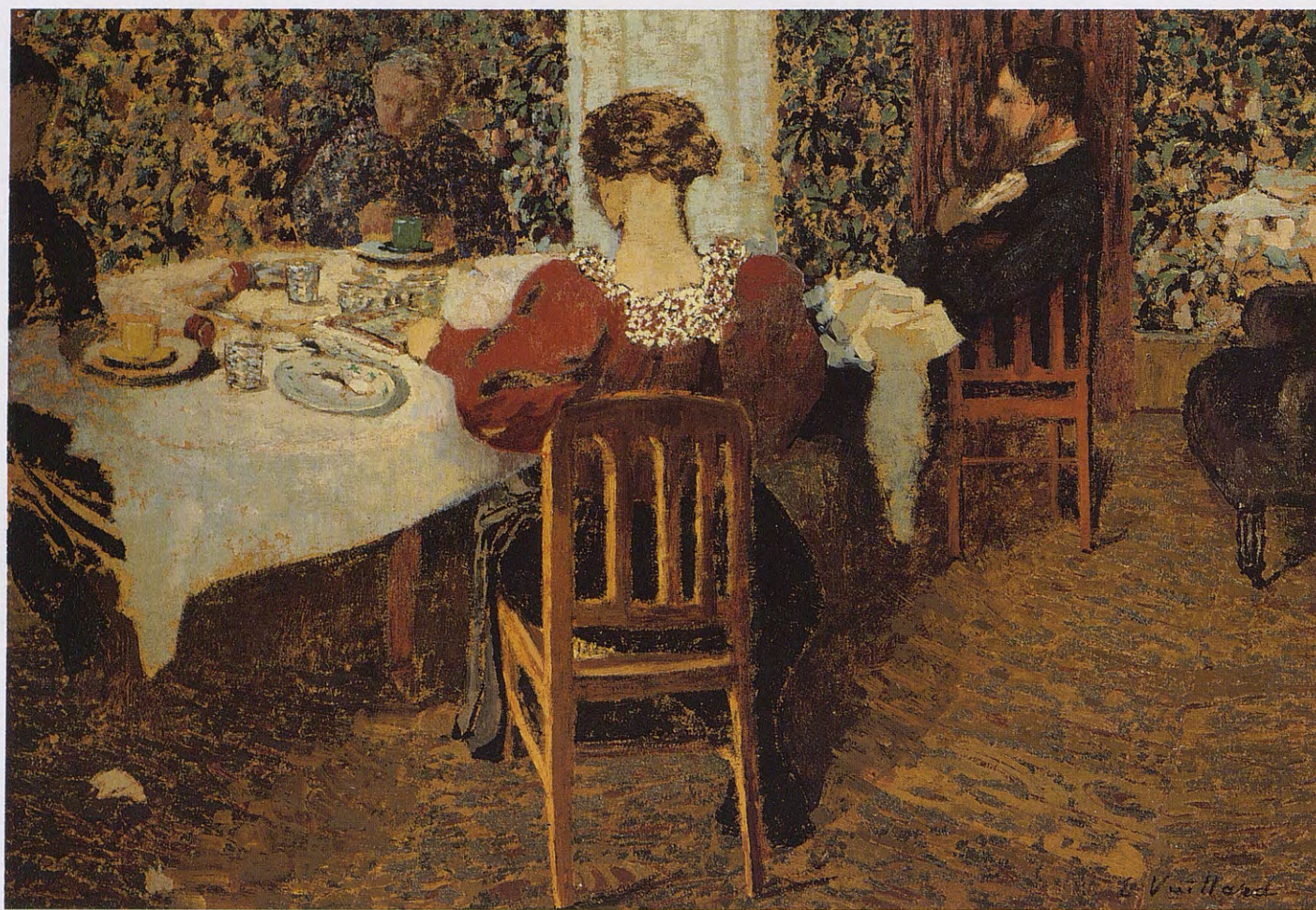
<sup>10</sup> Letter from Madame Vuillard to her son, 5 Oct. 1895, Salomon archives.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Marie Roussel to Vuillard, 6 Oct. 1895, Salomon archives.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Madame Vuillard to her son, 12 Oct. 1895, Salomon archives.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Madame Vuillard to her son, 15 Oct. 1895, Salomon archives.





IV-212

#### IV-212 The End of Lunch in the Vuillard Home

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
panel, 49.5 × 68.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, New York

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris – Louis Carré, Paris –  
Alfred Daber, Paris – Charpentier, Paris – Private col-  
lection, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908,  
no. 31 – New York, Seligmann, 1930, no. 23 –  
Zurich, Kunsthau, 1932, no. 129 [*Madame Vuil-  
lard et Madame Roussel*, 1893-95] – London, Toth  
& Sons, 1934, no. 9 – Paris, Rosenberg, 1936, no. 40  
[*Le Déjeuner*] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs,  
1938, no. 48 [*En famille*, 1897] – Paris, Charpen-  
tier, May-Sept. 1946, no. 99 (ill.) – New York, Selig-  
mann, 1948, no. 13 [*En famille*, c. 1897] –  
Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 58 (col. ill.), 102 –  
Sydney-Melbourne-New York, 1975, no. 112 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Bernard 1930, p. 26 (ill.) – George  
1938a, p. 26 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1945b, p. 3 (ill.)  
– Chastel 1946, p. 46 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1946a,

pp. 36 (ill.), 55, 79; 1946b, p. 75 (ill.); 1948c, pl. 22  
– Schweicher 1949, pp. 31, 35, 93 – Roger-Marx  
1968, p. 44 – Daniel 1984, fig. 65 – Ciaffa 1985,  
pp. 154-156, fig. 49.

**Description:** The family table in the dining-room hung  
with wallpaper in a pattern of fruit and leaves. Marie  
is seen from behind in the foreground, wearing a black  
dress and red blouse, her bare neck in a collar stippled  
with white. Profile of Roussel dressed in blue and black;  
Madame Vuillard in a chequered blouse in the back-  
ground. A fourth figure appears on the left, cropped by  
the plane. Yellow-and-green cups, and red napkin rings  
standing out sharply against the white tablecloth. A fair-  
ly detailed composition – especially the chair highlighted  
from the left – yet overall broadly worked and 'sym-  
phonic'. (AC)

Kerr-Xavier Roussel, Marie and Madame Vuil-  
lard are grouped around the dinner-table; the  
cropped figure on the far left may be the  
painter himself, come to join the family circle.  
A source of light, located somewhere  
beyond the frame on the left, highlights the  
edges of the chair in the foreground. The white  
tablecloth presents a superb still life, the objects  
of which, vividly catching the light, 'converse  
with one another in hushed undertones', as  
Claude Roger-Marx so memorably expressed

it.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, this appears to be the only form  
of conversation at the table; clearly, the lin-  
gering effects of the Roussel-Ranson scandal  
still weighed on family gatherings (see *Fam-  
ily Evening*, IV-211, and *Large Interior with  
Six Figures*, IV-215). The painter concentrates  
on Marie's dress, with its garnet-red, leg-of-  
mutton sleeves, and on the exquisite decora-  
tions of the white collar at the base of her  
splendidly elongated neck. The young Vuil-  
lard's sensuality homes in this part of the  
female anatomy, fetishising its nudity, as he  
was later to do in *The Nape of Misi's Neck*  
(VI-61). Madame Vuillard seems about to dis-  
solve into the floral pattern of the wallpaper,  
in marked contrast to Marie, who stands out  
sharply in the *contre-jour* from the window.  
Roussel, meanwhile, is viewed in profile before  
the sideboard. The composition's skewed per-  
spective, combined with the subtle interaction  
of its 'hard-edge' and 'soft-focus' details, con-  
vey the movements of the painter's eye as it  
darts swiftly back and forth through space.

<sup>1</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 79.

#### IV-213 Lady in Blue

1895  
Oil on cardboard, 49 × 58 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 19 – Paris,  
Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 35  
[*Intérieur à la femme en bleu*, c. 1890] – Paris, Berès,  
May 1957, no. 64 (ill., *La Robe bleue*, c. 1892) –  
Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 9 (ill.) – Albi, Musée  
Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 6 – Paris, Durand-Ruel,  
1961, no. 5 – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-64,  
no. 304 (col. ill.) – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich,  
1964, no. 11 (ill.) – Rome, Studio A, 1964 (ill.) –  
Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 49 (ill.) – Paris,  
Orangerie, 1968, no. 111 (ill.) – Toronto-San Fran-  
cisco-Chicago, 1971-72, p. 227, col. pl. v – Brus-  
sels, Musées Royaux, 1975, no. 26 (col. ill.) – Japan,  
travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 15 (col. ill.) – Zurich-  
Paris, 1993-94, no. 170 (col. ill.) – Florence, 1998,  
no. 61, p. 100 (col. ill.), and Montreal, 1998,  
no. 181, p. 46 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1945, p. 21 (ill.) – Chastel  
1948, col. pl. vi; and 1954, p. 52 (col. ill.) – *Arte  
figurativa antica e moderna* 7, no. 5, Sept.-Oct. 1959,  
p. 56 (ill.) – *Città di Milano*, no. 11, Nov. 1959,  
p. 648 (ill.) – Malingue 1960, pp. 44-45 (col. ill.)  
– *Emporium* 131, no. 782, Feb. 1960, p. 52 (ill.) –  
Salomon 1961, p. 31 (col. ill.); and 1962b, p. 32  
(col. ill.) – Russoli 1963, p. 98 (col. ill.) – *Lecture  
pour tous*, no. 121, Jan. 1964, p. 82 (col. ill.) – Abbate  
1966a, col. fig. 14 – Russoli 1966, col. pl. 2 – Dug-  
dale 1967a, p. 4, col. pl. 2 – Barilli 1967c, p. 125  
(col. ill.) – Salomon 1968, p. 49 (col. ill.) – Russell,  
exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-  
72, p. 24 – Russoli and Martini 1973, col. pl. 2 –  
*Paris Match* 1976, p. 123 (col. ill.) – Daniel 1984,  
pp. 77, 79, 315, fig. 108 – Thomson 1988, col. pl.  
9 – Warnod 1988, p. 41 (col. ill.) – Cogeval, exhib.  
cat., Florence, 1998, p. 189.

The 'lady in blue' is a visitor to the salon of  
Paul and France Ranson at 25 boulevard du  
Montparnasse, formerly the townhouse of  
Madame de Montespan. Ranson had a stu-  
dio there, known to the Nabis as 'the Tem-  
ple', and France Ranson was its 'Light'.  
Fervent discussions about Eastern religions,  
Wagner, theosophy and anarchism took  
place in the Ranson's drawing-room, which  
was also the setting for several memorable  
puppet-theatre performances.  
Two of the pictures on the wall have been  
identified as Jan Verkade's *Red Apples*<sup>1</sup> and



IV-213

Paul Sérusier's *Ranson in Nabi Attire* (see ill.).  
Thanks to the 1998 Montreal exhibition, the  
top middle painting has finally been identi-  
fied as well: it is Sérusier's *Stone-Cutters* (see  
ill.), a virtual manifesto of the Pont-Aven  
school.

According to Jacques Salomon, three of the



Paul Sérusier, *Ranson in  
Nabi Attire*, 1890, oil on  
canvas. Private collection.



Paul Sérusier, *Stone-Cutters at Pont-  
Aven*, 1890, oil on canvas. National  
Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

6). The hastily sketched figure on the far left,  
her ghostly presence reinforcing the somewhat  
caricatural aspect of the composition, is less  
easy to place. Still, the point of the compo-  
sition is surely that, far from opting for a real-  
istic approach, Vuillard has chosen to present  
us with figures caught at a moment when they  
are oblivious of each other. A salon intended  
for conversation has been transformed into a  
place for private reflection. The affair between  
Kerr-Xavier Roussel and Germaine Rousseau  
(see *Family Evening*, IV-211, and *Large Inte-  
rior with Six Figures*, IV-215) seems to have  
left everyone paralysed, with the exception of  
France Ranson, whose twisted body is dis-  
traught with grief.

<sup>1</sup> Jan Verkade, *Red Apples*, 1891, oil on canvas, priv. coll.





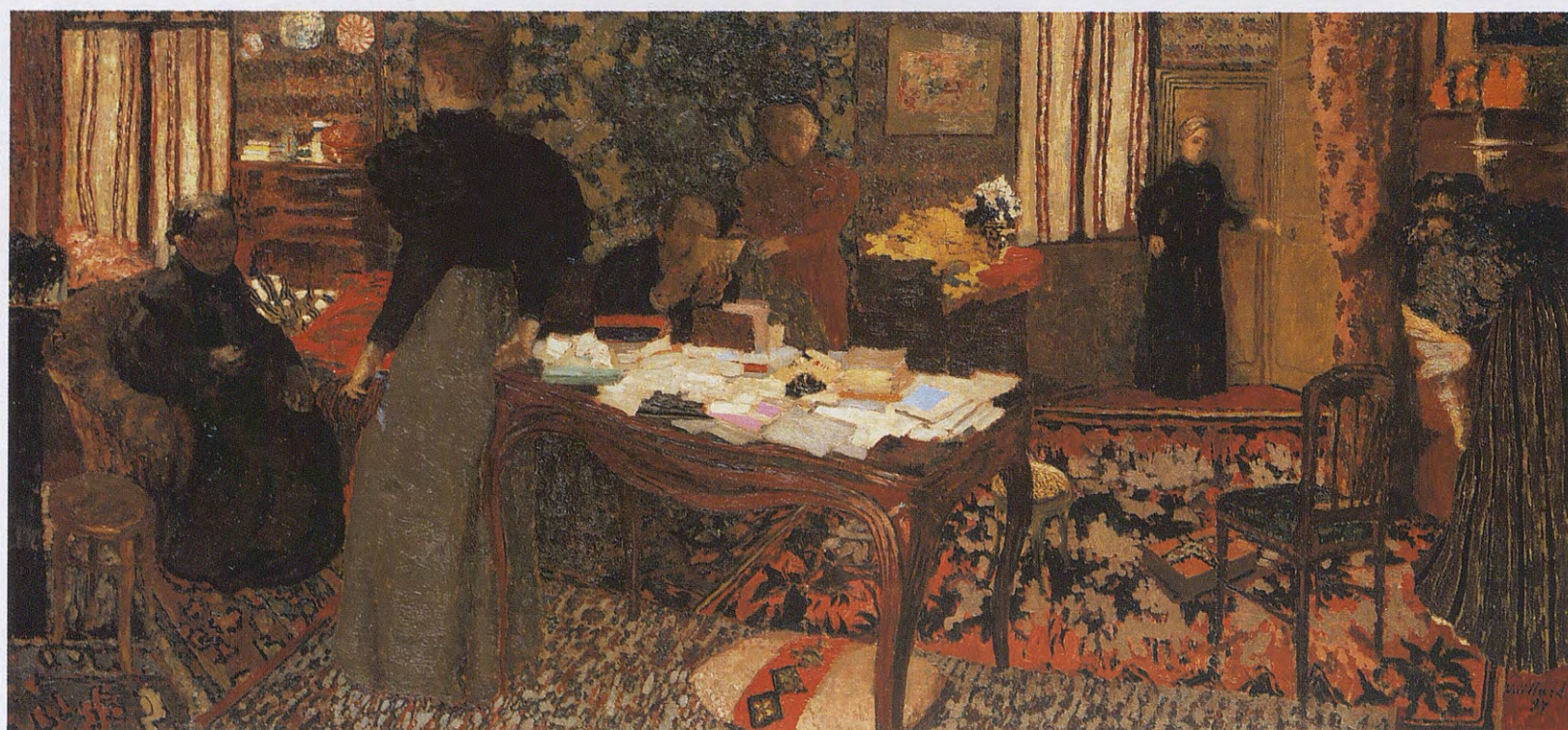
IV-214

#### IV-214 Large Interior with Six Figures (study)

1897  
Oil on cardboard (or panel),  
13.4 x 31 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, Lucerne (Switzerland)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Dr. Bangerter, Montreux (Switzerland) – Sale, Christie's, London, 3 April 1990, lot 297 (col. ill.) – Jan Krugier, Geneva, c. 1993 – Galerie Rosengart, Lucerne.

**Bibliography:** Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 345, col. fig. 174.1.



IV-215

#### IV-215 Large Interior with Six Figures

1897  
Oil on canvas, 90 x 194.5 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right:  
*EVuillard/ 97*  
**Kunsthau Zürich, Zurich (Switzerland),**  
Inv.-Nr. 1966/13

**Provenance:** Félix Vallotton, Paris, c. 1898 – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Kunsthau Zürich, Zurich, 1966.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Vollard, 1897 – Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, 1926, no. 223 – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1932, no. 133 (ill., *Le Grand Intérieur*, 1897)

– Lausanne, Vallotton, 1955 – Lausanne, Palais de Beaulieu, 1964, no. 154 (ill.) – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1973, no. 52 (ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 174 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Zurich, Kunsthau, [n. d.], col. pl. 141 – *Le Mois. Synthèse de l'activité mondiale*, June-July 1932, ill. on cover – *Werk* 30, Nov. 1944, p. 325 – Roger-Marx 1948c, pl. 7 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 84-85, 103-105 – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1959, repub. 1968, pl. 14 – Baumann 1966, pp. 61-66 (col. ill.); 1968, pp. 805, 806 (ill.); 1969, p. 62 (ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, p. 59 – Perucchi-Petri 1972, pp. 22-41, col. pl. 1; 1976, p. 139, fig. 93 – Daniel 1984, pp. 187-190, fig. 68 – Thomson 1988, pp. 44, 93, col. pl. 68 – Easton 1989, pp. 79, 82, col. fig. 53 – Rishel, travelling exhib. cat., United States, 1989-91, p. 113 – Cogeval, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, pp. 118, 126, 155 (ill.), 204-205 (col. ill.); 1993b, pp. 49, 60-61 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, pp. 86, 96-97, col. fig. 162 – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Winterthur, 1999-2000, pp. 22 (ill.), 23.

This particularly celebrated picture was given by the artist to his friend Félix Vallotton. Kerr-Xavier Roussel confided to Maxime Vallotton that, like *Lady in Blue* (IV-213), it depicts the drawing-room of the Ransons' boulevard du Montparnasse apartment. The picture-space seems so arbitrary and disjointed at first glance that it has been suggested that the figures portrayed in it are in fact repeated, echoed as it were – an attractive theory which would in itself justify interpreting it

as a dream-like composition, apparently inspired by symbolic and theatrical preoccupations. Several hitherto unpublished photographs from the Ranson archives (*Germaine Rousseau and Pierre Hermant at the Piano*, see ill.) would appear to bear out Kerr-Xavier



Germaine Rousseau and Pierre Hermant playing the piano, photograph. Ranson-Bitker archives.

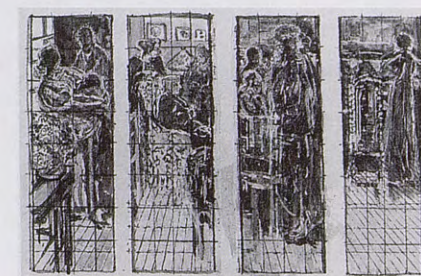
Roussel's interpretation.<sup>1</sup> If he is right, the young woman viewed from behind in the foreground of the painting, elegantly attired and standing by the table in the centre, is France Ranson's sister Germaine Rousseau, whose passionate love affair with Kerr-Xavier Roussel is by now a well-established fact (see *Family Evening*, IV-211). That she is portrayed facing Madame Vuillard in her armchair – the artist's mother must have despised her – would help to explain the composition's tense atmosphere. The man seated behind the table, reading a letter, is Paul Ranson. As for the woman entering the room through the door in the background, she is easily recognizable as France and Germaine's mother, the poet Ida Rousseau. A preparatory drawing of the composition (see ill.)



E. V., preparatory drawing for *Large Interior*, graphite on brown paper, 10.2 x 17.3 cm. Private collection.

shows a far more conventional spatial arrangement of the figures, and has certain points in common with a contemporaneous design for a folding screen by Kerr-Xavier Roussel

(published in the catalogue *Il Tempo dei Nabis*, Florence, 1998, no. 94, see ill.). Vuillard's brother-in-law may well have played a cru-



Kerr-Xavier Roussel, *Design for a Folding Screen*, watercolour and gouache, c. 1895, 18 x 22.7 cm. Private collection.

cial role in inspiring this mysterious picture. A comparison of the painted sketch of *Large Interior with Six Figures* (IV-214) with a picture by Félix Vallotton, *Woman in a Purple Dress by Lamplight* (see ill.), in which the *Large Interior* is shown hanging in the Swiss painter's apartment, may shed some new light



Félix Vallotton, *Woman in a Purple Dress by Lamplight*, 1898, tempera on cardboard. Private collection.



Félix Vallotton, *Woman in a Purple Dress by Lamplight* (detail), 1898.

on the matter of its iconographic content. Vallotton's 'quotation' of Vuillard's composition

does not include Ida Rousseau opening the door in the background; instead, it shows a man standing by a window, turning his back on the scene, in the same position as M. de Meyrueis in Vuillard's lithograph for the programme of Maurice Beaubourg's *La Vie muette*, performed at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre in 1894 (see ill.). In both instances the figure by the window appears to be immured



E. V., *La Vie Muette*, drame de Maurice Beaubourg, programme of the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, November 1894, lithograph, 31 x 23 cm.

in solitude, cloistered in his own private world, in an attitude that must have been familiar to the spectators of plays staged by Aurélien Lugné-Poe. Another of Vallotton's compositions, *The Red Room* (see ill.), depicts a second room in the Swiss artist's



Félix Vallotton, *The Red Room*, 1898, tempera on cardboard. Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne.

apartment, with the *Large Interior* reflected in the mirror above the fireplace. This time, however, Ida Rousseau is standing where we expect her to be; what is more, Vallotton has rather strangely reversed the reflected image, thereby restoring it to its true orientation but on a scale reduced by half compared to the width of the mantelpiece (as required by its presumed distance from the original).

What all this suggests is that Vuillard reworked the picture between 1897 and 1898, no doubt because its subject concerned



the Roussels and Ransons too directly and its atmosphere was too manifestly that of a family crisis. The artist often retouched his works after 1900, sometimes actually modifying their setting and replacing some of the figures in them (see *The Terrace at Vasouy*, VIII-37 and VIII-38). Unfortunately, he kept no Journal between 1895 and 1907, and we are therefore reduced to conjecture. Might the painted-out figure be Kerr-Xavier Roussel turning his back on his lover in the course of a heated family 'discussion'?

The crisis between Kerr-Xavier Roussel and the Ransons came to a head in October 1895, around the time when Vuillard was doing his military service at Écouves and Orléans. Certain details of the drama emerge in letters from Marie and Madame Vuillard to the painter, preserved in the Salomon archives. On 6 October, for example, Marie Roussel informed her brother that Roussel's attitude was cutting him off from his friends.<sup>2</sup> A few days later, Madame Vuillard wrote to her son to tell him of a meeting with the Ransons that does not sound all that different from the scene depicted in the *Large Interior*: 'I didn't reply to you yesterday evening because we were expecting to see the Ransons and I thought I might have something new to report to you. Nothing came of it; we spent a pleasant enough evening hardly speaking of the Young Lady, who appears to be less and less affected and whose only wish is not to hear anything further about the matter. As for Kerr, he is as stubborn as ever. Mimi still brings him his meals and sometimes shares them with him.'<sup>3</sup> Vuillard's Nabi friends having been informed of Kerr's affair with a girl named Caroline in 1892 (see the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels*, V-28.1 to V-28.6, and *The Suitor*, IV-132), it seemed all the more vital to surround the new scandal with a tactful silence. Quite unaware of the facts, Paul Sérusier invited the Ransons to dinner with Germaine and Kerr in December, unwittingly courting disaster ('We should have warned [him], or at least filled him in with a few details of this unpleasant story'). In the end, the family secret had a deeply unsettling effect on the Nabi circle. France Ranson was particularly angry about it; in January 1896, she informed Vuillard that she had broken off all

relations with Roussel: 'Your brother-in-law came to the studio this morning. Paul didn't dare or rather didn't know how to tell him to go away – having spoken to him only the other day about Denis's stained-glass window – I immediately wrote him a note – telling him that I spent more time than not in the studio and requesting him not to drop by any longer. I prefer you to know about it. I hope this will put a stop to the matter, but I thought everything was finished and that he wouldn't dare come back to the house.'<sup>4</sup> Her anger evidently faded in time, for Roussel was among the friends who founded the Académie Ranson in 1908.

If Vuillard did indeed replace the male figure in the first version of the *Large Interior* with France Ranson's mother, it can only have been because the allusion to the family crisis in the autumn of 1895 was too pointed. Like a twentieth-century Soviet photographer, skilled in doctoring official pictures, he may well have opted for a solution acceptable to everyone: painting out Roussel and painting in Ida Rousseau against a rectangle that looks as if it has been embedded in the composition. He may have given the original version of *Large Interior* to Vallotton and have subsequently altered it in 1897, whence its definitive dating. This chain of events seems more plausible than one in which the artist looks back on a painful moment in his life two years after the crisis and, working from memory, reconstructs it after the manner of an Ibsen play. It would also partly explain the strange, heterogeneous nature of the composition. The Ransons' drawing-room was actually smaller than appears here. However, the distortions in the perspective and the distribution of the figures – some of them quite monumental – unquestionably justify the painting's title, *Large Interior*. Few of Vuillard's works make such a demand on the eye, which has constantly to shuttle back and forth between background and picture plane, detail and overall composition. The alternation of concave and convex shapes has suggested to some scholars – foremost among them Émilie Daniel – that it is like a large five-panelled screen or a set of mirrors in a zigzag arrangement reflecting a scene observed from several different viewpoints. Each of the

décor's vertical elements (the wall-hanging, the curtains, the wallpaper) is prolonged by the furniture in the foreground and the clothing worn by the figures. Amid this apparent chaos, each body establishes a separate geometry that accentuates the wave-like aspect of the picture-space. If we were to chart the way we 'read' the picture, it would look something like this:



Thus our gaze is drawn to either side of the centre: left towards the sideboard in the background and the red accents of the Japanese (or Art Nouveau) plate displayed on the shelves above it; and right towards the doorway where Ida Rousseau stands. The centre of the composition, on the other hand, appears to come towards us. It is not here, however, that Vuillard situates the actual drama: our gaze focuses obsessively on the table leg that looms startlingly in the foreground, rendered in photographic, almost hyper-realistic detail. Red – the red that tinges the edges of all the objects on view – is the dominant note of the composition's decorative texture, its patchwork of curtains and wall hangings stitched together and weighing uniformly downwards. Seldom had Vuillard gone so far in combining a 'collage' of disparate planes with a subtle exploration of a family torn apart by suffering, foretokens of a universe that was starting to come apart at the seams. It is partly for this reason that the *Large Interior* stands as one of the high points of his art.

The members of the artist's family – those ambiguous protagonists of this 'symphony in red major' with its atmosphere of impending crisis – stand frozen, as though oblivious of one another's presence. They are like the hieratic allegorical figures haunting the murals of Puvis de Chavannes (at the time, the old master's reputation was at its height among the avant-garde). An impenetrable silence answers the clamour of the artist's palette. With its scenographic, almost Pirandellian, approach to space, Vuillard's depiction of the Ransons' drawing-room provides the artist

with an opportunity to extend, in a demonstration that is nothing short of a virtuoso performance, the limits of his art. He cites, very discreetly to be sure, various elements of his vast visual culture; in effect, he has painted a polyptych here, or rather a mighty altarpiece in the Flemish manner. Its figures, furnishings and objects are bound together in groups, as in Jan van Eyck's *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*,<sup>6</sup> which Vuillard had gone to see with Kerr-Xavier Roussel in November 1892 at the time of their brief Belgian 'escapade'. From paintings spread over several panels in this way, Vuillard worked out an arrangement of narrative registers by means of anamorphous distortions that tend to merge in a seemingly weightless space. Better still, as in Petrus Christus's monumental *Lamentation* (see ill.) – whose dimensions are very similar to those of the *Large Interior* – the figures are



Petrus Christus, *Lamentation*, c. 1472, oil on wood. Musée Royal des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.

placed in a space consisting of alternating perspectives, grouped in masses contained by strange serpentine lines. Vuillard borrows the Flemish painters' sense of a visual totality that in no way precludes an obsessive attention to certain details, in contrast to the Albertian system which assigns an equal weight to everything within its ambit.

On another level of association, Ida Rousseau's appearance in the background recalls that of the gentleman silhouetted in the open doorway of Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (see ill). Such covert homages to tradition serve to underwrite the artist's fragmentation of traditional perspective. Barely a decade after the *Large Interior* was painted, the techniques of collage, on the one hand, and the Cubist recomposition of reality, on the other, were to lead the avant-garde to re-examine the very object of painting.

<sup>1</sup> The author is grateful to Brigitte Ranson-Birker for this information.



Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas* (detail), 1656, oil on canvas. Museo del Prado, Madrid.

#### IV-216

#### M. Roussel and His Wife

1896

Oil on cardboard, 45 × 40 cm

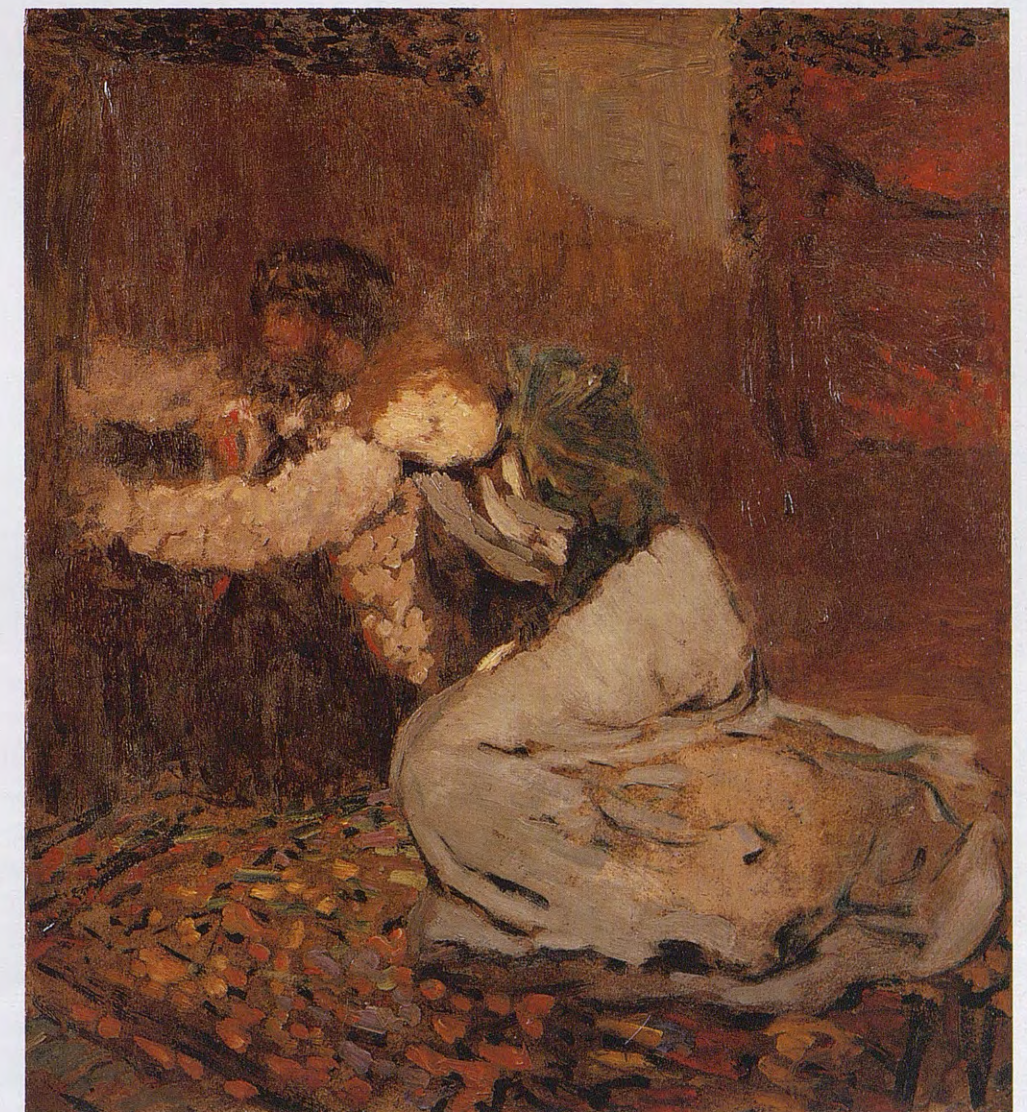
Stamp 2, lower left

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alex Maguy, Paris – Galerie Bellier, Paris – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Munich, Kunstverein, 1959, no. 33 (ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 27 – Paris, Maguy, 1969 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 66, p. 19 (ill.).

**Description:** *Roussel, wearing a red tie, is shown in profile, seated in shirtsleeves on the left, on an oriental rug, his legs drawn up and his hands on his knees. His wife, dressed in a green blouse and a grey skirt spread out on the carpet, rests her head on his shoulder. (JS)*



IV-216





IV-217

## IV-217 Married Life

1896

Oil on cardboard, 51 × 56 cm  
Signed, upper left: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection, Great Britain

**Provenance:** Artist's studio [*Rue Truffaut le soir*]  
– Private collection, Paris – Arthur Tooth & Sons,

London – Anthony Samuel, London, 1963 – Private collection, Great Britain.

**Exhibitions:** Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 45 (ill., *La Vita coniugale*, c. 1900) – London, Tooth & Sons, Nov. 1963, no. 15 (ill.) – Paris, L'Œil Galerie d'art, 1963, no. 2 – London, Tooth & Sons, April-May 1969, no. 11 (ill.) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 29 (ill., *Married Life*, c. 1894).

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 62 [*Après le café, 28 rue Truffaut*] – *Emporium* 131, no. 782, Feb. 1960, p. 56 (ill.) – Abbate 1966a, col. pl. 15 –

Russoli 1966, col. pl. 12 – Barilli 1967c, p. 128 (col. ill.) – Dugdale 1967a, p. 4, col. pl. 12 – Negri 1970, p. 21, col. pl. 41 – Kozloff 1971, p. 71, fig. 11 – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, pp. 32, 49, 55 – Russoli and Martini 1973, col. pl. 12 – Daniel 1984, pp. 156-159, fig. 59 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 227-238, fig. 101 – Easton 1989, pp. 94, 97 – Koella, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, French ed., pp. 98-99, fig. 12 – Sidlauskas 1997, pp. 107-109 (ill.).

**Description:** *An invisible lamp sheds its dim light around the room, highlighting the white cups on the*

large table to the right, the white doorknob on the left and a small straw chair in the background. Madame Roussel, wearing a spotted dark-grey dress and a red silk scarf around her neck, is seated on the left, casting a shadow onto the ochre-coloured wall-paper. Kerr-Xavier Roussel stands in the background, dressed in black, with his back to the window; through it we glimpse the blue of the night sky deepened by lights outside. The composition is pervaded by a Maeterlinckian atmosphere. (JS)

This composition was long viewed as a critique of the sheer tedium of a *petit-bourgeois* evening. Chastel saw it as 'a dining-room after dinner, when there is nothing left to say'. In reality, the predominantly sombre tones of the picture, noticed by every Vuillard scholar, spring from the fact that the artist is evoking a tragedy that occurred in his family in 1896.

By the end of 1895, Marie and Kerr-Xavier Roussel's relationship had grown less unstable (see IV-211). Vuillard and his mother moved from 346 to 342, rue Saint-Honoré, while the artist's sister and her husband settled into a home of their own at 15 place Dauphine and resumed life together. The painter then left for a holiday with the Natansons at Valvins, and Madame Vuillard wrote to him several times to tell him how the couple was faring.<sup>1</sup>

'Mimi is gradually nearing the end of her term', the artist's mother informed him towards the end of July 1896, 'and this gives us hope that we shall have a healthy baby within a month. Kerr has his good moments and some awful ones too, but things are going fairly well as he takes his wife to dinner in the country every evening.'<sup>2</sup> Petit-Jean, the outcome of the Roussels' improved relations, was born on 26 August and Vuillard returned to Paris for the occasion. He

sketched the baby in his 'Agenda-Souvenir' for 1896 (see ill.), while Kerr designed a card to announce the birth (see ill.) – Maurice Denis had done the same when his daughter Noëlle was born on 30 June of that year. Vuillard then returned to Valvins to spend



Kerr-Xavier Roussel, announcement card of Petit-Jean's birth, 1896, lithograph. Private collection.

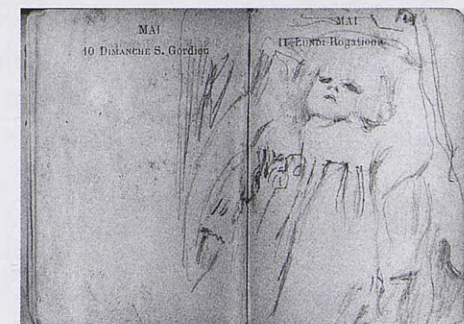
artist assembles the tragic details: the cups in the foreground, discarded, grotesque; in the background, the sky, a uniform cobalt-blue against which the glow of the street-lamps on the place Dauphine stands out lugubriously. *Married Life* is a masterpiece of theatrical composition and self-restraint. 'It is a drama of the inner life, whose silence is sometimes rent by a shriek or shot through with whispers.'<sup>4</sup>



Kerr-Xavier Roussel, *Petit-Jean's Birth*, 1896, graphite on paper. Private collection.

the autumn with Misia and Thadée; it was there that he received the news of a sudden decline in Petit-Jean's health. He rushed to Paris on 6 November, but arrived too late: the infant had died during the night.

This second trial left Marie permanently scarred. *Married Life* must have been painted shortly thereafter, at a moment when – cruel irony – Vuillard was busy painting the sets for Lugné-Poe's production of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu roi* (December 1896). The artist captures a moment of unendurable silence, as the grieving couple stare vacantly into space. Between them stands the child's highchair, forever empty. Émilie Daniel immediately sensed the importance of this overwhelming detail: 'One suddenly understands, one sees that this ill-defined armchair is the real, dramatic and geometric, centre of the composition: placed on the median line that divides the picture in two, isolating a figure to either side, it floats in the background, at an equal distance from their eyes yet invisible to them, ghostly, like a memory or a pang of conscience, visible to us.'<sup>3</sup> Solemnly, the



E. V., study of Petit-Jean, from the *Agenda-Souvenir*, 1896, graphite on paper, 8.3 × 5.6 cm. Private collection.

<sup>1</sup> Letters from Madame Vuillard to her son, after 16 July 1896, Salomon archives.

<sup>2</sup> Letters from Madame Vuillard to her son, end of July 1896, Salomon archives.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel 1984, p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel 1984, p. 159.



## IV-218

## Interior, Mystery

1896

Oil on cardboard, 35.8 x 38.1 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 15698, *Mystère*), 16 Feb. 1907, 148.50 F – Bought back by Vuillard on 20 Feb. 1907, 148.50 F – Artist's studio – Carroll Carstairs, New York – John Koch, New York, c. 1968 – Koch sale in aid of the Manhattan School of Music, Christie's, New York, 11 May 1989, lot 267 (col. ill.) – Galerie Bellier, Paris – Jan Krugier, Geneva, c. 1993 – Vicente Madrigal collection, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1899 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 57 (ill.), 102 [*Mystery*, c. 1895] – University Park, The Pennsylvania State University, 1968, no. 9 (ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90 (not in cat.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 53, p. 113 (col. ill.) – Gifu, Museum of Fine Arts, 1993, no. 176 (ill.) – Zurich, 1993, no. 173 (col. ill.) – Montréal, Musée des Beaux Arts, 1995, no. 461, p. 162 – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 25, p. 96 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 50 [*La Lampe à pétrole*] – Ritchie 1954, p. 16 – Mauner 1963-64, pp. 101, 103, fig. 13 – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 19 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, p. 101, fig. 57 – Mauner 1978, pp. 255-256, fig. 130 – Georges 1982, pp. 167-168 – Daniel 1984, pp. 151-153, fig. 57 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 62, 63 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, pp. 12, 77, col. fig. 16.

**Description:** Light enters the dark dining-room through a half-open door on the right, and strikes the brown corner of a chest-of-drawers and the unlit brass petrol lamp standing upon it. The lamp's shadow falls across a plate and is projected obliquely to the top of the partially-glazed partition, creating a deep, dense effect. (AC)

Known hitherto only to a small handful of art-lovers, this picture has recently begun to acquire a considerable reputation. Yet when it was first exhibited at the Durand-Ruel gallery in 1899, Gustave Geffroy spotted it immediately: 'I note also that Monsieur Vuillard has a most curious sense of modern life, and is able to find beauty everywhere... [and] with a simple sign placed in the right spot, to suggest a kind of wisdom and gravity.'<sup>1</sup> Though the artist declined to include *Interior, Mystery* in his retrospective of 1938, he

must have attached some importance to it, since, four days after selling it to the Bernheim-Jeune gallery in 1907, he bought it back for his private collection. Were there any personal reasons for this? With his customary acumen, George Mauner was the first to grasp the importance of this composition, which seems to hark back to the Gothic symbolism of Vuillard's 1889 *Dinner Time* (IV-2). The painter lays particular stress on the oil lamp on the right and on the disproportionately large, unlit ceiling lamp to the left, looming up so close to the viewer that it looks slightly out of focus. The violence of the artificial lighting conjures up an otherworldly atmosphere. Mauner sees a special significance in the Greek *tau* in the pool of light at the top of the composition, having earlier noticed its presence in *In Bed* and *The Lady of Fashion* (II-123 and II-135): 'In *Mystery*, the beams of light themselves create the cross revealed by a luminous spot of uncertain origin. In emphasising this sign, a theosophical symbol of the absolute, and weaving it into the room, Vuillard adds new meaning to the atmosphere and significance of the painting as a whole. The *tau*-shaped cross is a reference to androgyny and to the unity of antagonistic forces.'<sup>2</sup>

Mauner cannot possibly have been familiar with the detailed preparatory drawing (see ill.) for *Interior, Mystery* in one of Vuillard's notebooks. In it, the artist sketches the main

features of the setting, concentrating mostly on the path taken by the light, which is all the more forceful, it would seem, for having been drawn in pencil. By means of these emphatic outlines, which seem to reach out towards us rather than to sink into the room, he gives a palpable rendering of the light breaking in from the right, casting its brilliance onto the open door at the centre of the room and transforming the shadow of the lamp into a menacing presence. The Greek *tau* is even more conspicuous than it is in the painting, as if it were being pinpointed by two invisible spotlights – a method of stage lighting that was only just coming into use at the time. Quite apart from the presence of the cross in the two compositions, the link between *Interior, Mystery* and *In Bed* is of particular interest, inasmuch as the underlying discourse of the two works is almost certainly bound up with the notion of 'the sleep of death' and the threats that hang over infancy. Most of the scholars to have commented on the first of these have stressed its Symbolist character and its connection with the techniques of stage design. The way the vertical strip of wallpaper is revealed on the right and the ill-defined appearance of the objects on the small table – surely that is not a plate by the oil-lamp, but the lamp's conical shade or, to be more precise, the shade's reflective underside – create what critics of German Expressionist



E. V., preparatory drawing for *Interior, Mystery*, 1896, graphite on brown paper, 11 x 13.9 cm. Private collection.



IV-218

drama would term an *Ichdramatik* effect, in which the elements of the scenery absorb and, by their very blending-together, reflect the inner drama of a character, even when that character does not appear on stage. For the feeling of absence in Vuillard's composition has a hitherto unrivalled density. It is hard to resist the temptation to view it in conjunction with *Married Life* (IV-217), the tragic dimension of which hinges entirely on the void created by Petit-Jean's death in November 1896. The furniture and the position of the objects are identical to those in the Vollard album lithographs, and clearly situate this composition in the apartment at

342 rue Saint-Honoré, which Madame Vuillard and the painter forsook for the Batignolles district in November 1897. The importance that Vuillard attached to *Interior Scene*, and the fact that he kept it in his private collection and did not show it at exhibitions during his lifetime, strongly supports a dramatic and autobiographical interpretation of the composition. To hazard a metaphor inspired by the film *Citizen Kane*, *Interior, Mystery* may be the artist's 'Rosebud',<sup>3</sup> the heart of his secret. The curators of the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris were clearly unaware of this at the time of the Vuillard donation, and it left the artist's studio amid

widespread indifference. Over the decades it has regained some of its former glory. Seldom in Vuillard's œuvre do theatrical techniques overlap so powerfully with his private life; moreover, it was at this precise juncture that the artist put an end to his participation in the Théâtre de l'Œuvre.

<sup>1</sup> Gustave Geffroy, *Le Journal*, 15 March 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Mauner 1978, pp. 255-256.

<sup>3</sup> *Citizen Kane* draws its narrative unity from an investigation by a journalist, who vainly seeks to unravel the meaning of the press magnate Kane's dying word, 'Rosebud'. The very last image of the two-hour film shows a welter of objects having once belonged to Kane being incinerated. The camera moves close up and freezes on an ordinary child's sled bearing the name 'Rosebud'. This inscription is gradually obliterated by flames.



## V – Between Irony and Symbolism: Towards the Decorative (1891-99)

*'For some dreamers, water is the cosmos of death. Ophelia's fate is therefore substantial, the water is nocturnal. Near it, everything predisposes to death. Water communicates with all the powers of night and death.'*

Gaston Bachelard

Vuillard was not adventurous. It never crossed his mind to set off leaving everything behind and sail towards the paradisiacal antipodes, or to go and seek the 'revelation of the East' in North Africa as Matisse was to do. Paris was his world at this time, and would remain so. In his youth, however, he painted a large number of landscapes in the countryside, profiting by holidays at Créteil with his Aunt Saurel. The latter, who was very close to his mother, seems to have been important during his formative years, for much later, in 1937, when writing in his Journal, he expresses his delight at having found 'Aunt Saurel's landscape drawings'.<sup>1</sup> Before 1896 Vuillard had at most travelled short distances by train: certainly to Cherbourg to see his brother who was stationed there and to Vaux-en-Parisis for the christening of Henri-Gabriel Ibels's son, whose godfather he agreed to be (July 1894). He also took advantage of obligatory periods of military service in Ecrouves and Orléans (September-October 1895) and later in Toul (October 1898). In Paris he usually walked, or he was *par excellence* a solitary rambler – and also, perhaps, because it saved the bus fare. Few painters have been such acute observers of the *details* woven into the complexity of the urban cauldron. Living as he did in the heart of Paris he could easily walk to museums and gardens. When he moved in 1904 into a bigger and better lit apartment in the neighbourhood of Passy, he soon realized his mistake, in spite of the convenience of the underground.

Vuillard contemplated Paris society from a distance with as much affection as humour, never with the pitiless eye of his friend Félix Vallotton who, in his horribly funny woodcuts often showed Parisians as dazed and dangerous puppets. Vallotton's children are little monsters and coachmen are all drunkards (see ill.); women, solely concerned with

what they are going to buy at the dressmaker's, are wicked temptresses (see ill.) and lie as easily as breathing; as for policemen, they are still and always thick brutes at the orders of the boss class. In short, his was a delectable 'Célinian' vision – that people adored. There is nothing of the kind about Vuillard. His gift for caricature, although always present, is used to accentuate his astounding silhouettes, from *Young Girls Strolling* (V-17) to *The Blue Vase* (V-109). The influence of Japanese-style framing was perceptible: from 1890 on Vuillard collected prints by Kunisada, Hiroshige and Hokusai (see Chapter II, p. 69) and often studied them. These small paintings are unpretentious, and yet still constructed like impenetrable mysteries. Thus, until quite recently, people habitually referred to *In the Garden* (V-33), with its two old men and a little girl on a bench, as *The Third Class Carriage*, not in the least perturbed by the presence of a flowering tree inside a compartment! In return, Vuillard's art cannot be reduced to the level of the comedy sketch, although he still looked at things with a caustic eye. He painted a number of sketches at this period, but all of them were now made as preparation for large decorative compositions. We cannot find in his work the Parisian picturesqueness of Béraud (thank goodness!), much less the angry social concerns of Steinlen or Hermann-Paul. And yet, around 1893-94 he, like his friends Roussel and Vallotton, had a close brush with anarchist circles: in 1894 he was following the trial of the Thirty, in which his friend of *La Revue Blanche*, Félix Fénéon, was seriously implicated, being suspected of having himself manufactured the bomb that exploded at the Restaurant Foyot (April 1894).<sup>2</sup> But it was the temper of the times, rather like the late 1960s when all intellectuals were, at one point or another, Maoists. For all that, Vuillard did not stop his night-time excursions;





Félix Vallotton, *The Drunkard*, 1895, woodcut, Galerie Vallotton, Lausanne.



Félix Vallotton, *Money*, 1898, woodcut, Musée des Beaux-Arts, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland.

indeed, he went out more and more at night during this period. It was a taste he shared with all his friends except for Ranson and Denis. His long-time friend Pierre Veber, put it very clearly: 'Outside this centre [*La Revue Blanche*], there were three spots in Paris where we were almost certain to run across our friends at certain times. From nine o'clock till eleven it was the promenade of the Nouveau Cirque. We were great fans of this entertainment, and had all got our entry tickets. From eleven until half past midnight it was rare for one of us not to turn up at the Moulin-Rouge, where we revelled in the deafening music. Finally, between one and three in the morning we went to Le Poucet du boulevard, where we ate crayfish cooked in a beer the secret of which had been lost. There was nothing harmful about these amusements. Nevertheless, without inviting the ridicule heaped on gentlemen of a certain age who exaggerate the days of their youth, we can state that we were more light-hearted at the end of the nineteenth century. We still had an appetite for pleasures that complemented so happily our appetite for ideas. We lived in a sort of rapturous illusion.'<sup>3</sup> Vuillard, who was painting ever more scenes of cafés, Alcazar gardens and other venues where you could round off the night 'till time ran out', would certainly have agreed with these comments. At the turn of the century he was lucky enough to witness the high old times at the Moulin Rouge that attracted so many foreigners (see ill.), and had just met Toulouse-Lautrec through the *La Revue Blanche* network. And the Moulin Rouge in 1895 had none of the watered-down Hollywood-style reconstructions we see today; it was one of the places in Paris where you could

find everything a well brought up young man should not be seeking: noise, madness, wild dancing. Women, drunkenness, alcohol, drugs and sex for all tastes as twilight fell. It is understandable that after four years in Passy Vuillard moved back to Place Vintimille.

The painter of *The Suitor* was to 'freeze' the society of his day in a perfect manner in his large-scale decorations. His friend Bonnard was wont to say: 'Our generation has always sought to relate the arts to life'.<sup>4</sup> The Impressionists had already dreamed of wide surfaces to paint, and commemorative events, such as the Universal Exhibition of 1889 and 1900, provided the opportunity to offer some painters – never avant-garde ones – enormous surfaces to decorate. The witty Albert Aurier, who died too young, had taken up the cudgels on behalf of Gauguin the 'decorator' in an article entitled 'Symbolism in Painting': 'Gauguin, it must be repeated, like all other idea-driven painters, is above all a decorator. His compositions are cramped in the limited field of a canvas. One is sometimes tempted to take them for fragments of huge frescoes, and they almost always seem about to burst out of the frames that unduly confine them! ... Well, in this miserable century of ours we have only one great decorator, possibly two counting Puvis de Chavannes, and our imbecilic society of bankers and graduates of the Polytechnique refuses to give this rare artist the least little palace, the tiniest national hovel in which to hang the rich mantles of his dreams! The walls of our Pantheons of philistinism are sullied by the ejaculations of people like Lenepveu and Mister So-and-so from the Institut!'<sup>5</sup> As we know, nothing came of it, and only Puvis de Chavannes – the real guid-



Henry Evenepoel, *The Spaniard in Paris*, 1899, oil on canvas, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Ghent, Belgium.

ing light of Vuillard's creative life – lit up the period with his décor for the staircase of the Musée de Rouen (see ill.) and later the 'murals' of the Boston Library. In fact, the allegories of Industry and Agriculture for Rouen, mute and hieratic<sup>6</sup> in their stylized robes, are the elder sisters of the ideal women in the *Desmarais Panels* a little later.

In the 1890s the Nabis were not thinking about public buildings but rather about private apartments. Their art was best appreciated in small spaces. It is interesting that the 'minor' Nabis excelled in the decorative arts: Ranson in tapestries and wallpaper, Sérusier in screens (the four-leaf *Le Torrent* of 1890-95 is a masterpiece), Ibels in fans and stage costume. All of them subscribed to the ideas already promulgated by William Morris in his shocking lectures on theory (*Art in the Time of Plutocracy*), without really adopting his resolutely socialist tone. Not one of them belonged to the Second Internationale, although Kerr-Xavier Rousset would later be very close to the Communists. These ideas gradually became widespread in the 1890s: art available to everyone, the surfaces of walls beautified by art that was no longer of the trompe-l'oeil variety,<sup>7</sup> beauty everywhere, the rejection of vulgar, mechanized reproductions, and the arts at the service of the majority.

From 1894 on, Vuillard became the definitive rhapsodist of the Paris parks, recently redesigned by the engineer Alphand. His *Public Gardens* are his most famous and recog-

nizable creation throughout the world. For many people they expressed the essential Paris, the city's secret heart. Thanks to the parks Vuillard is forever the poet of green spaces. He brought to life a kind of wonderland, a *hortus deliciarum* for modern times, and his exclusive sovereignty over it was undeniable. Since adolescence he had walked through the Tuileries (see ill.) – designed by Le Nôtre – but he also went to other parks and gardens to watch the crowds that thronged there: the Bois de Boulogne, the Square de la Trinité (V-37), the garden at Batignolles and the Place Vintimille<sup>8</sup> (V-6). He would bring back heaps of sketches filled with lively infants in sailor suits, their nannies who wore a characteristic cloak, little girls being told off and suspicious prowlers. It is also conceivable that scribbling in a sketch book with an air of inspiration, sitting thoughtfully in a public garden, attracted some interest from the fair sex, especially when they guessed at the extreme shyness of the artist, who found it difficult to accost a woman (V-37). It is easy to imagine him sitting for hours in the Parc de la Trinité watching the movement of the leaves, the patches of sunlight between the trees, the slow decline of daylight in the course of those lovely summer days, light that changed all the colour values and flooded the façades of apartment buildings with pink. In his Journal before 1895 it is certainly the composition of *Public Gardens* that is the subject most often and most deeply pondered over in the two notebooks from his youth. Looking at the *Lady with the Unicorn* in the Musée de Cluny he mused on the French tapestry tradition, and then considered the Japanese pottery in the Musée Guimet. It is true that he saw Alexan-



Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, *Inter artes et naturam*, 1890, oil on canvas mounted on the wall, detail, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen.





Louis Vert, Little pastrycook in the Luxembourg Garden, photograph, 1900-1906. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

dre Natanson's commission as a real challenge, and he came out of it with flying colours; however, as always he went through short periods of doubt and depression: '30 August Yesterday despair faced with the paintings, to the point of tears. The afternoon finally distracted by the crisis over trivialities that are always the reason for this despair in me, I go to the Tuileries and recover by magic on the day I was most desperate the feelings that guided me at the start of my work. Impossible to write all the notions that went through my head on the subject. Fresh reason for doubt in the usefulness of mechanical work. I can only note down the feelings from which my ideas sprang.'<sup>9</sup> In the penetrating study of the work she published in 1993, Gloria Groom points to convincing paintings by other artists such as the Finn Albert Edelfelt's *The Luxembourg Garden*.<sup>10</sup> We could add Manet's *Music in the Tuileries Gardens*.<sup>11</sup> Enlightening though they are, these comparisons end up by consigning to oblivion everything that is not Vuillard and his 'open-air privacies',<sup>12</sup> even the brilliant Manet. A precedent that must often have occurred to him was the example of Fragonard and the eighteenth-century *fêtes galantes*, and also Le Sueur's large panels in the Louvre and the decoration of the Hôtel Lambert.

The maturing Zouave's vision of decorative art enabled him to depict on a large scale the triumph of an ideal humanity. He thus constructed a *modern allegory*, and it can be asserted that all his early large décors are allegories, from *The Album* (1895, V-96.1 to 5) to the *Vaquez Panels* (1896, V-97.1 to 4). Less suspended beyond time than those by Odilon Redon, they do not resort to the 'virgins on bic-



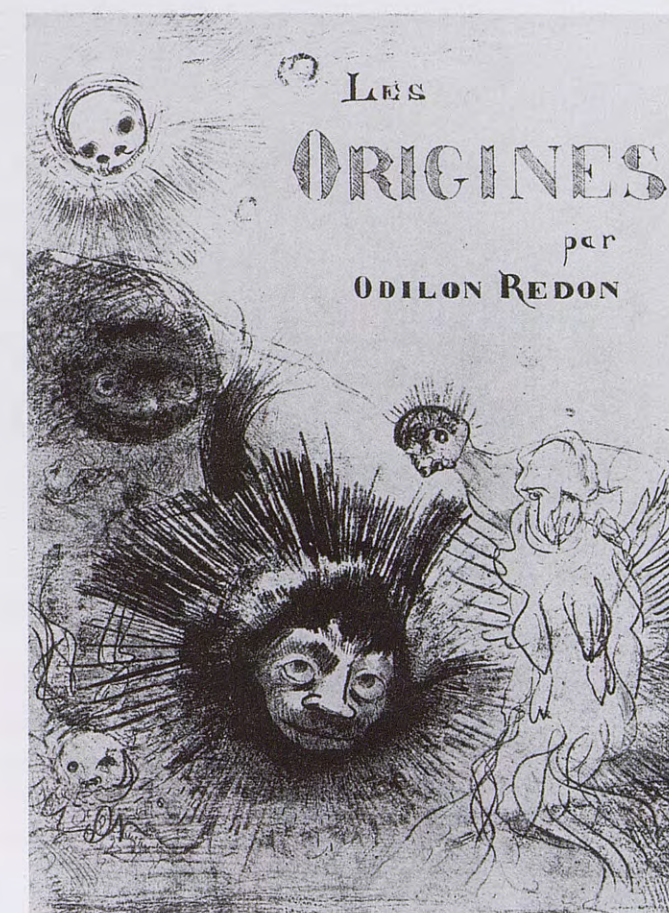
Louis Vert, Liquorice water vendor and toy vendor in the Tuileries, photograph, 1900-06. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

ycles' that Vallotton mocked in Maurice Denis's painting. What is more, in executing the *Public Gardens*, Vuillard used the technique of distemper, for the first time transposed to 'pictures'. And these were from the start absolute masterpieces of technical virtuosity. One is dumbfounded by the tiers of Veronese green and turquoise-blue in the continuous line of chestnut trees, and admires the facility with which he peppers the fine gravel of the paths with blue accents in the shady parts.

The nine panels take us from one park to another, from the Tuileries to the Bois de Boulogne – or to the heights of Saint-Cloud, as Roger-Marx suggests<sup>13</sup> – and yet the unity of the work is still striking. The *Public Gardens* is one of the most beautiful pantheist hymns of praise Vuillard ever composed on the deep bond between humanity and nature. The wind blows through it as never before in his paintings. His innate sense of how to organize panels, with the distances necessary to make their progress 'cyclical', is quite simply unnerving. And yet at times there is something springing from a 'summer panic' in this inspired panorama.<sup>14</sup> Vuillard's symbolism is gently gloomy, sometimes dressed in dark colours and studded with muffled chords. He had not previously dared to tackle large formats in the marvellous *Desmarais Panels* (V-28.1 to 6), an emphatic tribute to Japanese art and to medieval altarpieces, but he superimposed three high 'piers' above the two big drawing-room doors in a luxury eighth *arrondissement* apartment. Here he gradually evolved the decorative arrangements and the repertoire of gesture that obsessed him. In the Desmarais panels we already see people playing shuttlecock in the park,

country houses with little gardens (is that Aunt Saurel's house at Créteil in *Patting the Dog?*),<sup>15</sup> and most importantly the seamstresses (without his mother or sister) with their hieratic movements, caught up in the unforeseeable rhythm of a Japanese dance. In this first of his decorative masterpieces he stresses the confusion between dressmaking and painting.

The five *Natanson Panels* (V-96.1 to 5) are more unusual, first because of their motley dimensions but mostly because it is impossible to decipher at first glance what is going on. This is probably because nothing is 'going on'. It would be fruitless to try and identify characters or to determine an iconography linked to his family life or friends. The subject of *The Album* is women slowly emerging from a chaos of flowers and objects, and *interchanging* the stuff of which they are made with the surrounding decorative material, rather like Odilon Redon's figures in the series of prints *Les Origines* (1883)<sup>16</sup> – which Vuillard probably bought in 1893 (see ill.). The only titles of the plates in this album reveal a biomorphic idea of creation. Plate 1: *When Life Was Awakening in the Depths of Obscure Matter*; plate 3: *The Siren, Clothed in Barbs, Emerged from the Waves*; and the eighth and last plate: *And Man Appeared Questioning the Earth from Which He Emerged and Which Attracts Him, He Made his Way Toward Sombre Brightness*. All his life Vuillard admitted that he was under the spell of Odilon Redon's art (see ill.). And others of his decorative works besides *The Album* are transpositions of the elusive mysterious poetry of the Symbolist master. I am thinking in particular of *The Clos Cézanne Garden at Vaucresson* (1920, XI-52) and the *Kapferer Frieze* (1922-25, XI-208.1 to 7). And indeed, when one looks at Maurice Denis's *Homage to Cézanne* (see ill.), among the Nabis surrounding Redon it is Vuillard who is gazing at him with such intensity, radiating an ecstatic joy at being in the old master's presence. In her fine study on Odilon Redon's later work, Gloria Groom notes that in 1898 he had wanted to found an 'artistic society' with Maurice Denis, André Mellerio and Édouard Vuillard, which would also have included the pianist Ricardo Viñes, Debussy's friend. Redon dreamed of calling it *The Ternary Art*,<sup>17</sup> that is, based on the three great forms of artistic expression. For Redon, like Vuillard, remained deeply attached to the notion of correspondences between literature, music and painting. In the ex-Nabi's case there was always this idea of 'fate at work' inside the frame; but this time he uses a sort of elusive tonality, linked to a continuous melody, that is quite unexpected.

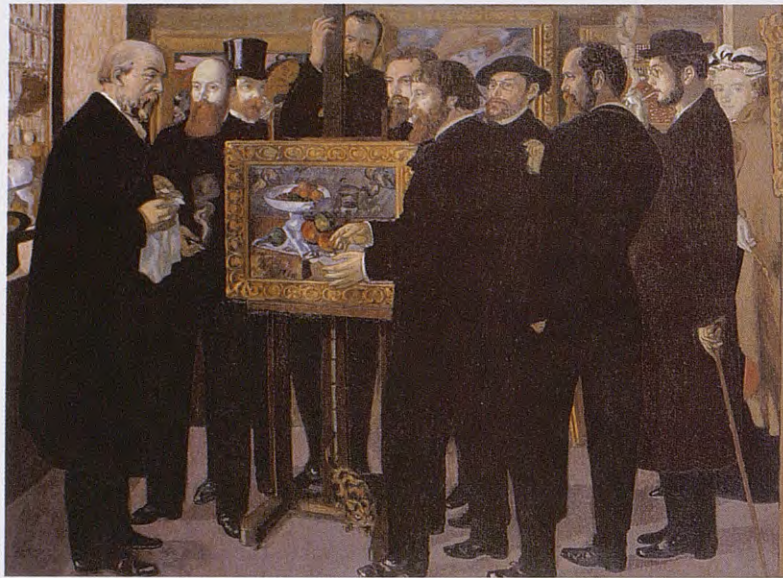


Odilon Redon, Frontispiece to the album *Les Origines*, 1883, lithograph, in André Mellerio, *Odilon Redon. Catalogue de l'oeuvre lithographié*, Paris, 1913, p. 95, pl. XI.



Odilon Redon, *Portrait of Vuillard*, 1900, red chalk on paper. Private collection.





Maurice Denis, *Homage to Cézanne*, 1900, oil on canvas. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

ed. His art has become supreme; the presence of women whose bodies are woven right into the background, among flowers that explode silently into space, are as 'decorative' as Brangaine's calls announcing daybreak to the two lovers in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* or in the dying murmur of the 'Sirens' in Debussy's *Nocturnes*: the voice is transformed into an instrument, blended as it is into the midst of the orchestra. Vladimir Jankélévitch has described wonderfully well this dizzy attraction to the death of harmony: 'The depth to which the Sirens call us is somewhere and nowhere; this depth is a snare and a deception; a false depth! Man tempted by the Sirens becomes something that is nothing.'<sup>18</sup> In the two cycles that end his Nabi period, *The Album* and *Figures in an Interior*, Vuillard does not drift into a pessimistic vision of woman, although he is more firmly rooted than ever in international Symbolism. His tone is one of diffuse melancholy, not a fear of castration or a nightmare. He did not believe in a hypothetical 'immemorial battle' between men and women, unlike Franz von Stuck and Max Klinger whose contemporary work was obsessed with it. In musical terms, he does not provide lurid harmonies, the expected din of the *tutti* as in the music of Ernest Chausson, but rather long drawn out cadences, a calm clarity of composition and, it must be said, a figurative language of the void, just as Claude Debussy demonstrated ideally in his pre-*La Mer* music.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 2 May 1937, IV.11, fol. 18v.

<sup>2</sup> On this subject see Halperin 1988; Bernier 1991, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> Veber 1938, pp. 278-279.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Terrasse 1988, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Albert Aurier, 'Le Symbolisme en peinture. Paul Gauguin', *Mercury de France*, March 1891, published in Aurier 1995, pp. 38-39.

<sup>6</sup> *La Poterie* and *La Céramique* were shown at the Salon de la Société nationale des Beaux-Arts at the Champ-de-Mars in May 1891 before being installed in Rouen.

<sup>7</sup> Unlike the elephantine machines at the Universal Exhibition, such as the *Panorama du siècle* by Gervex and Stevens (1889).

<sup>8</sup> He probably disliked the Buttes-Chaumont park, one of the follies of the Second Empire, with its irregular plan. In his view of gardens, Vuillard was also very French.

<sup>9</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 30 August 1894, I.2, fol. 48v.

<sup>10</sup> Albert Edelfelt, *The Luxembourg Garden*, 1887, oil on canvas, 144 x 188 cm. Ateneum, Helsinki.

<sup>11</sup> Édouard Manet, *Music in the Tuileries Gardens*, 1862, oil on canvas, 76 x 118 cm. National Gallery, London.

<sup>12</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 122.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>14</sup> Rather as at the start of *La Scène aux champs* in Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, where the flute answers the clarinet in a long and painful silence.

<sup>15</sup> There is no documentation in the Salomon archives to confirm this.

<sup>16</sup> Odilon Redon was strongly influenced by the research of the botanist André Clavaud.

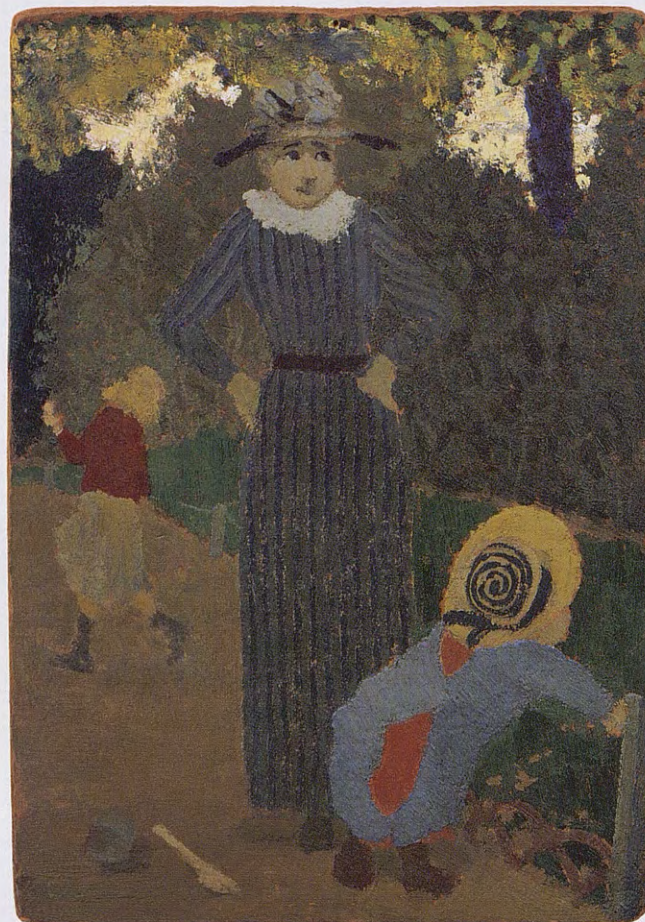
<sup>17</sup> Gloria Groom, *Redon cat.*, 1995, p. 306.

<sup>18</sup> Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Debussy et les mystères de l'instant*, Paris, 1976, p. 96.

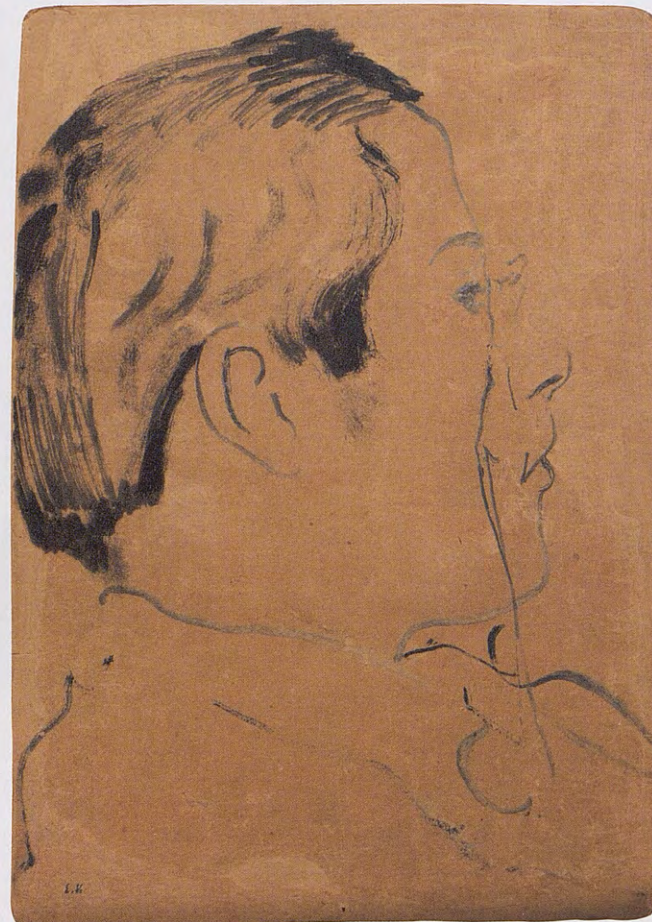


Little Girl in an Orange Shawl  
V-62 (detail).





V-1r.



V-1v.

**V-1**  
**In the Park, the Straw Hat**  
 [recto]  
**Portrait of Henri Roussel**  
 [verso]

1891  
 Oil on cardboard (recto)  
 Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 91*  
 India ink, pastel and gouache  
 on cardboard (verso)  
 Stamp 3, lower left, 32 × 22.5 cm  
 Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Description:** A woman wearing a blue-green dress decorated with a ruche and a pointed hat stands in the middle of a path. Beside her in the foreground is a little girl in a red dress and straw hat; in the background is a second little girl with yellow hair. Bordered with brown hoops, the harsh green lawn to the right is bounded by dark foliage through which two small areas of beige-coloured daylight appear above an ultramarine-blue tree-trunk. (JS)

This is one of the first genuinely outdoor scenes to be painted by Vuillard during his

Nabi period. In contemporaneous works such as *The Bois de Boulogne* (II-45), *Man with Two Horses* (III-47) or even *The Goose* (III-46), nature is presented in purely abstract, Synthetist and scenographic terms, as a pretext for the arranging of compartmentalised, flat planes. The *cloisonisme* employed here is far more audacious: note the red tear in the child's blue smock and the concentric circles of her wide straw hat. The artist remains faithful to the studied *gaucherie* of *Young Girls Strolling* (V-17). The attitude of the mother – or, as is more likely, the nursemaid – is sheer caricature; she seems weary of the child's games, but the child, unperturbed, is ready for all kinds of further mischief. The picture presents us for the first time with a world that Vuillard will continue to develop throughout his work; notably some few years later in *The Public Gardens* (V-39) and in the many paintings connected with that major cycle. The little girl playing in the background turns up in almost identical form in *The Game of Shuttlecock* (V-28.6) in the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels*, on which Vuillard

would shortly begin work. The signature at the bottom of the painting – green on green – is all but invisible. On the rear of the cardboard panel, but the other way up in relation to *The Straw Hat*, the artist has sketched a portrait of Kerr-Xavier Roussel's brother, Henri (1870-1927), a physician and a close friend of Vuillard between 1887 and 1895. A photograph that can be assigned to the same period shows the three men at Nanteuil, at the home of Roussel père (see ill.).



Édouard Vuillard, Henri and Kerr-Xavier Roussel at Nanteuil, 1891, photograph. Private collection.

**V-2**  
**Little Girl with a Hoop**

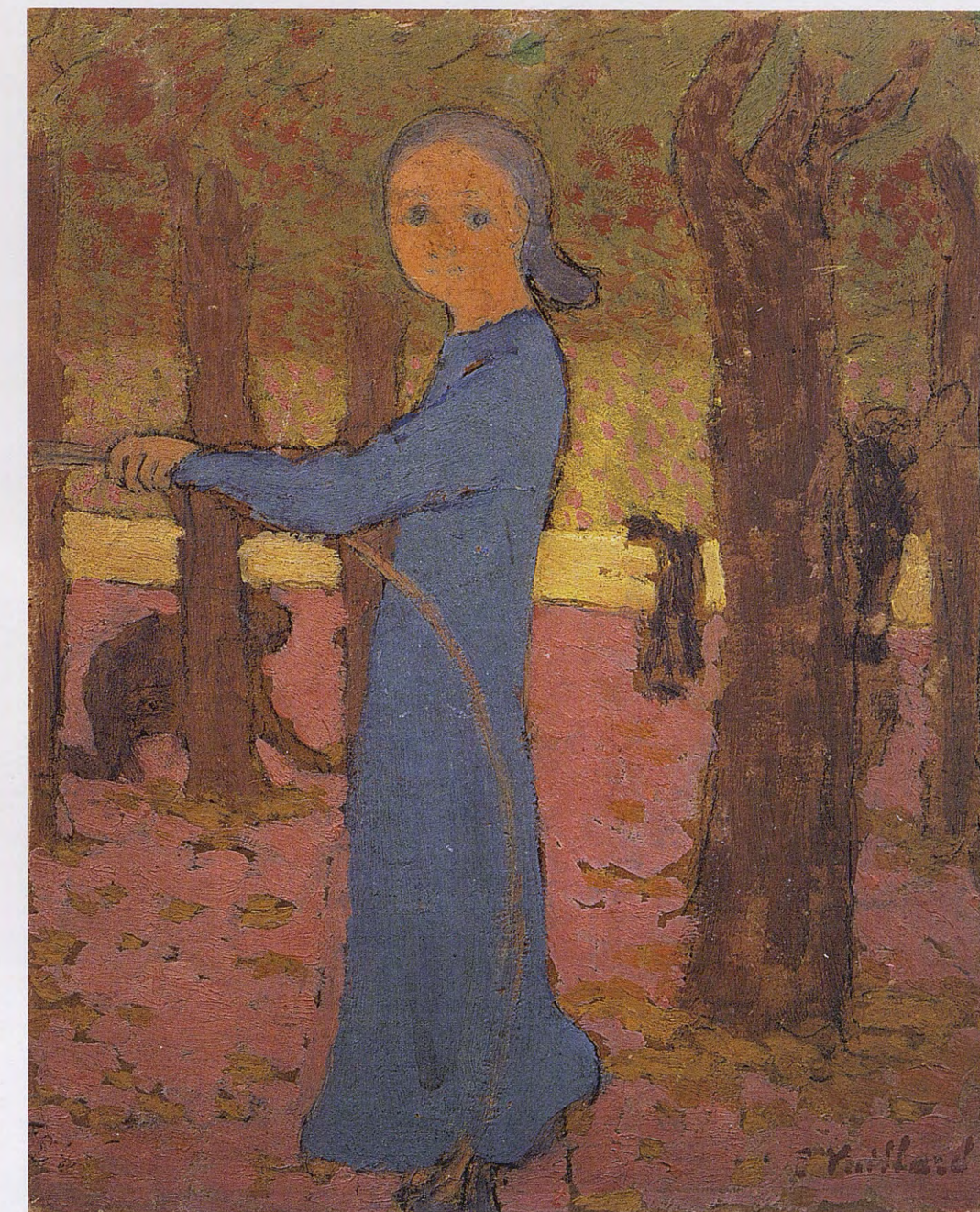
c. 1891  
 Oil on cardboard, 21.5 × 17.5 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower right  
 Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1953, no. 63 [*Le Cerceau*].

**Description:** Blue dress in a flat tone. Pink background, with reddish-brown tree-trunks and pale green leaves. (AC)

In order to render the Tuileries in a concise, 'synthetized' fashion, Vuillard uses pastel shades, with a predominance of pink, yellow and green. The little girl sketched in the foreground resembles one of the contemporaneous figures painted by Maurice Denis. Her Apollonian stance is perfect; holding a hoop, she is like a divinity, her finger resting on some heavenly orb. The detail of the circle bisected by the edge of the frame is magnificent, as are the clear-cut partitionings of the intermediary hues; the similarities with Maurice Denis' *Panels for a Young Girl's Room*<sup>1</sup> are patent and are further evidenced by the pink shadows on the ground, the cross formed by the horizontal band of yellow in the background and the girl's rigid and hieratic blue dress. The soft green employed for the median lines of the trees is dotted with splashes of pink, giving a deliberately Symbolist effect. The figure scraping together leaves behind the tree in the middle ground is almost a direct quotation from an unpublished sketch which may have been an idea for the theatre and



V-2

was probably made between 1890 and 1891 (see ill.).

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Denis, *Four Panels for a Young Girl's Room*, 1891-1892, oil on canvas: [*September*] 38 × 61 cm, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; [*October*] 38 × 61 cm, collection of M. and Mme. Arthur G. Altschul; [*April*] 37.5 × 61 cm, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo; [*July*] 30 × 60 cm, Fondation Rau pour le Tiers-Monde, Zurich.



E. V., study sheet, pen and brown ink on paper, 49 × 36.5 cm. Private collection.





V-3

### V-3 The Game of Shuttlecock

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard, 18 × 24 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Switzerland – JPL Fine Arts, London, c. 1981 – Private collection, London.

**Exhibitions:** Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 13 (col. ill.) – Lausanne, Vallotton, 1979-80, no. 40 – London, JPL, 1981, no. 49 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, p. 41, no. 17 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *On a garden path, a young girl in a blue dress is about to strike the shuttlecock; on the right, a second girl in a blue skirt and yellow blouse is turning to face the painter. To the left are two slender spectators in black. The style of the composition is still somewhat caricatural.* (AC)



V-4

### V-4 Women and Children in a Public Garden

c. 1891-92  
Oil on cardboard, dimensions unknown  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *A deliberately exaggerated study of silhouettes of women and children, with a lawn rising up in the background.* (AC)

### V-5 Young Lady in a Garden

c. 1891  
Pastel on paper, 24 × 31 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – L'Œil Galerie d'Art, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *The seated model is shown full-face, leaning forward, and with a bright orange bow in her hair. A pink form tapers off in a curious arabesque at the girl's neck, which is set round with a black band. In the background, a dark black tree-trunk stands out against an ultramarine sky, bright green foliage and the yellow silhouettes of trees, visible through the gaps in the railing. In the foreground we see, on the left, the back of a chair and, on the right, a light-coloured wall.* (JS)



V-5

### V-6 Little Girl in Front of Some Railings

1891  
Oil on cardboard, 33.5 × 20 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 91*  
Muzeum Narodowe, Warsaw, inv.  
no. M. Ob. 1222

**Provenance:** Gabriela Zapolska, Paris – Bronistawa Rychter Janowska – Amelia Grelowa – Muzeum Narodowe, Warsaw, 1978.

**Exhibition:** Warsaw, Narodowe, 1982.

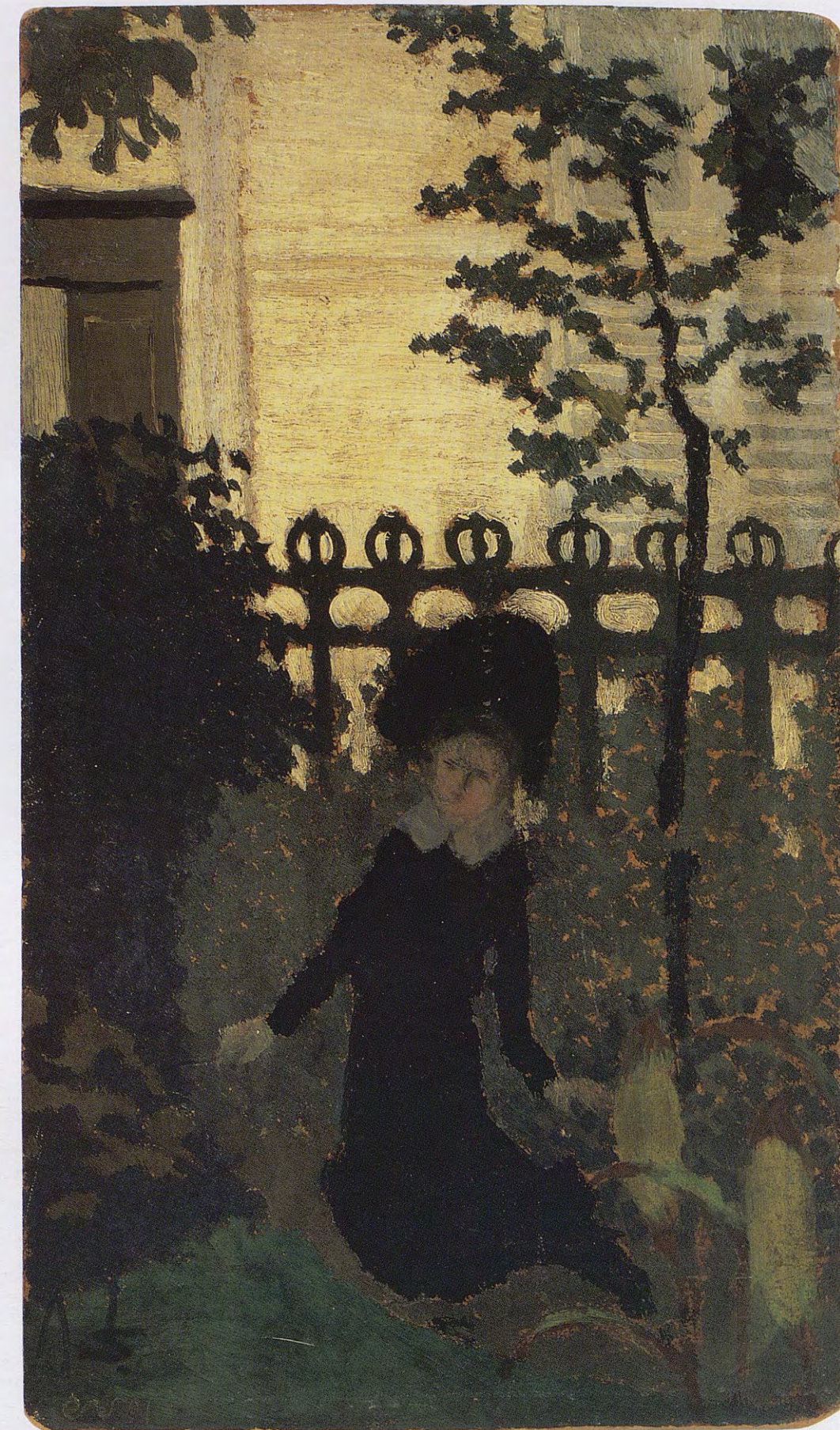
**Bibliography:** *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie* 24, nos. 2-4, 1983.

A sketch for this little-known composition can be found among a group of drawings



E. V., Journal, I, 2,  
fol. 37r.

in Vuillard's Journal (see ill.). Situated between his written entries for April and May/August 1891, it presents the same little girl apparently kneeling on a grassy bank, with a tree behind her. This well-behaved young lady is also wearing the same large hat. The railings behind the girl, which Vuillard depicts in a fairly realistic manner, can also be seen in *Young Girls Strolling* (V-17). The façade of the building visible in the background is probably that of 10 place Vintimille, as would seem to be confirmed by the dark shop-front near the top left of the painting and the distance between the railings and the façade. The highly poetic manner in which the perspective of the path is rendered in relation to the sloping grass further underscores the ties between this painting and V-17. The place Vintimille was less than five minutes' walk from the studio

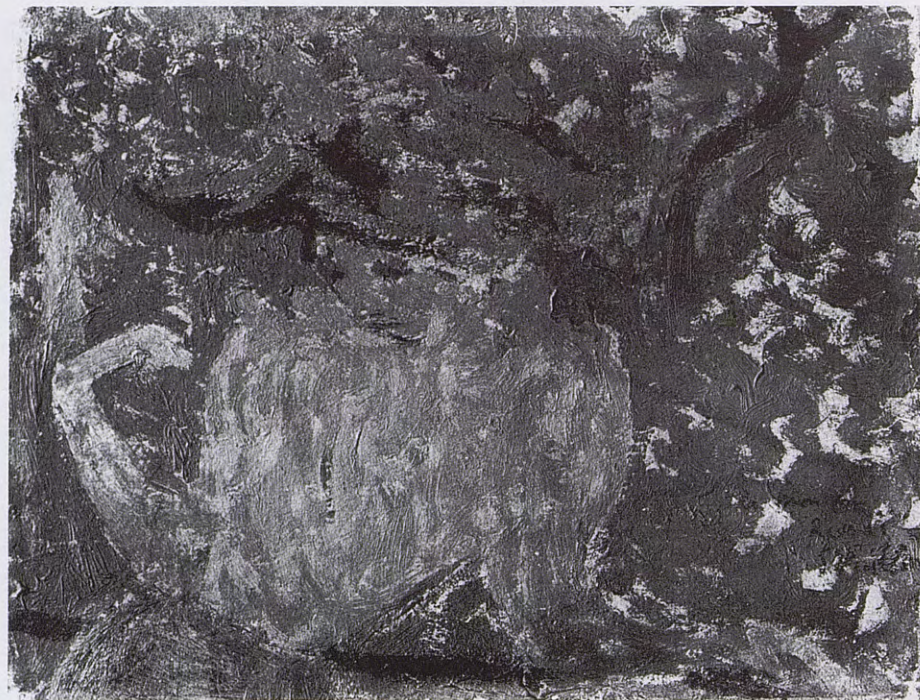


V-6

Vuillard shared with Bonnard and Lugué-Poe at 28 rue Pigalle; the young painter is

already strolling in the neighbourhood he was to frequent in his maturity and old age.





V-7

## V-7

Graceful Woman  
in a Garden

c. 1891

Oil on cardboard, 16.5 × 21.7 cm

Signed and inscribed, lower right: *à mon ami / Ronai / E Vuillard*Rippl-Rónai Múzeum, Kaposvár  
(Hungary)Provenance: Jozsef Rippl-Rónai, Kaposvár –  
Rippl-Rónai Múzeum, Kaposvár.

V-8

## V-8

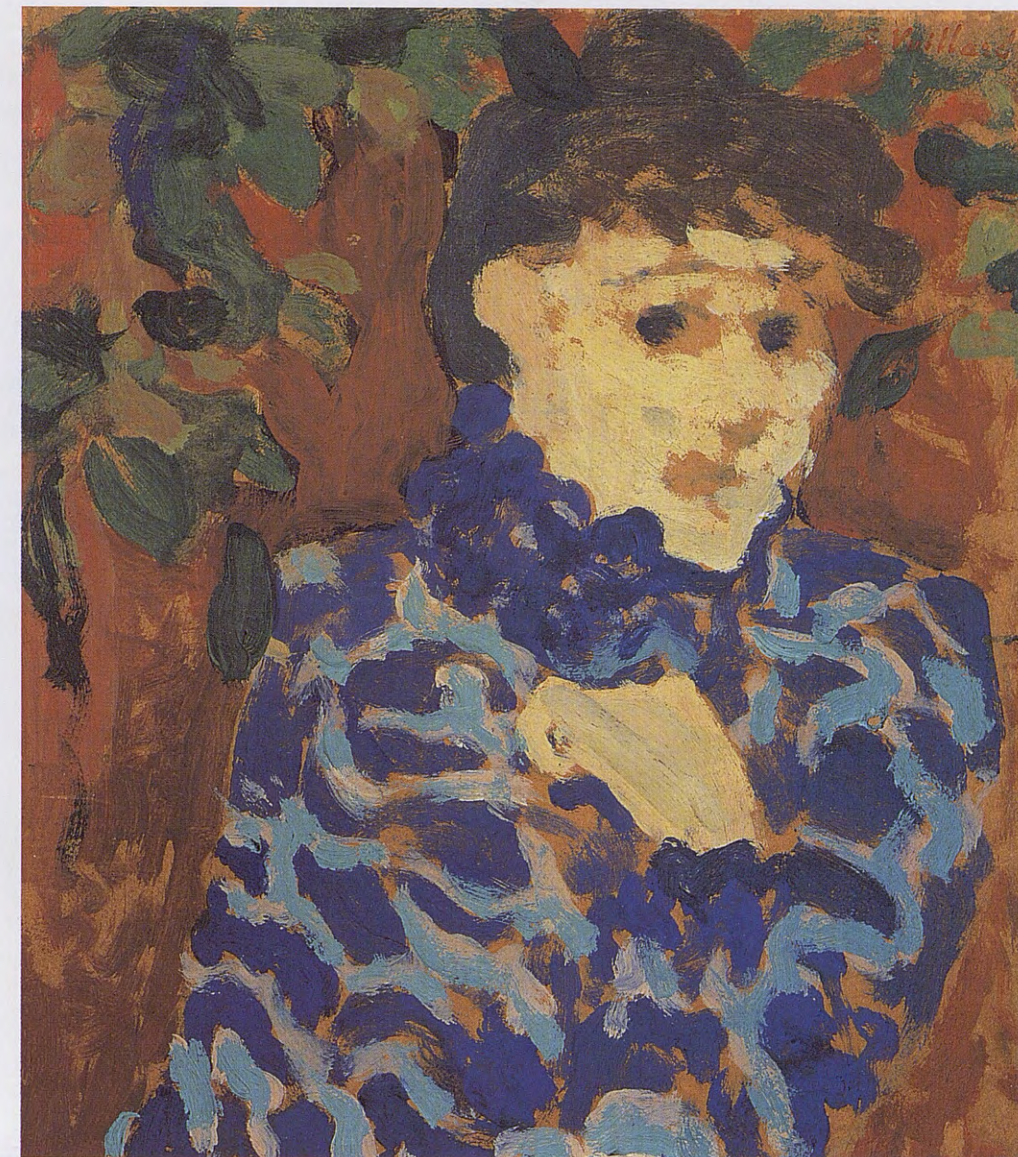
## Young Woman in a Garden

c. 1891

Pastel on paper, 24 × 24 cm

Stamp 3, lower right

Private collection, France

Provenance: Artist's studio – Jean-Claude Dupuis,  
Paris – Private collection, France.

V-9

## V-9

Woman in a Blue Brocade  
Blouse

c. 1892

Oil on cardboard, 25 × 22 cm

Stamp 1, upper right

Private collection, London

Provenance: Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg,  
Paris – Sam Salz, New York – Colonel Edgar Gar-  
bisch, New York – Garbisch sale, Sotheby's, New  
York, 12 May 1980, lot 30 (col. ill.) – Thomas  
Gibson Fine Art, London – Thomas and Anthea  
Gibson collection, London.Exhibitions: Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 24 –  
Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 57 (ill.)  
– Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 4 – Los Angeles-  
San Francisco-Cleveland, 1965, no. 24 – New  
York, Christie's, 1968, no. 35 (ill.).

Bibliography: Ciaffa 1985, pp. 298-299, fig. 160.

Description: Against a red background overhung  
with foliage, a dark-haired woman in a blue blouse  
veined with pink and turquoise clutches her collar.  
The expression on her face is rendered by the black  
blotches of the eyes. The importance of the gaudy  
blouse for the overall effect of the composition recalls  
The Floral-Pattern Dress (IV-3). (AC)The woman in this composition, especial-  
ly the black, marble-like eyes darting a side-  
long glance at the spectator, resembles Biana  
Duhamel (see *Biana Duhamel in the role of  
Miss Helyett*, III-1, and *The Striped Dress*,  
III-3). In his Journal for 1890, Vuillard  
depicts a number of *élégantes* (fashionably  
dressed women) in a somewhat exaggerat-  
ed manner and with similar black dots for  
the eyes (see ill.). The style of this small pic-  
ture, however, suggests that it was painted  
at a slightly later date (see *Hot Chocolate*, IV-63, and *The Bowl*, IV-73). The turbulent  
background, combined with the floral-like  
patterning of the blouse, enables Vuillard to  
sketch the gesture of the woman holding her  
collar closed with great vigour.

E. V., Journal, I.2, fol. 4v.





V-10

**V-10**  
**Standing Woman in Black,  
 Seen from Behind,  
 Arranging Her Hair**

1892-93  
 Oil on cardboard, 31 × 17.5 cm  
 Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
 Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Mme Prosper-Émile Weil, Paris – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 30.

**V-11**  
**Standing Woman Seen from  
 Behind, Arranging Her Hair**

c. 1891-92  
 Oil on cardboard, 21.5 × 10 cm  
 Private collection, London



V-11

**Provenance:** Dr. Carl V. Petersen, Copenhagen, c. 1950 – Pontus Grate, Copenhagen; Mrs. Eric Grate, Copenhagen – Sale, Christie's, London, 6 Dec. 1983, lot 330 (col. ill.) – JPL Fine Arts, London and Kunsthandel Sabine Helms, Munich (Germany) – Private collection, London.

**Exhibition:** Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 6 (col. ill.).

**V-12**  
**Figure Seen from Behind**

c. 1891-92  
 Pastel on paper, 12 × 12 cm  
 Stamp 3, lower right  
 Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alfred Ayrton – John Ayrton, Monte Carlo (Principality of Monaco) until 1991 – Private collection, Greenwich (Connecticut), 1992.



V-12



V-13

**V-13**  
**The Red Dress**

c. 1891-92  
 Oil on cardboard, 26 × 12.8 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower right  
 Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Fred Uhler, Neuchâtel (Switzerland), 1973 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Neuchâtel, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, 1975, no. 99.

**Description:** *A small girl in a red dress before a tangle of greenery. The stark colour contrasts are rendered with the utmost simplicity.* (AC)



V-14

**V-14**  
**Man and Boy Walking**

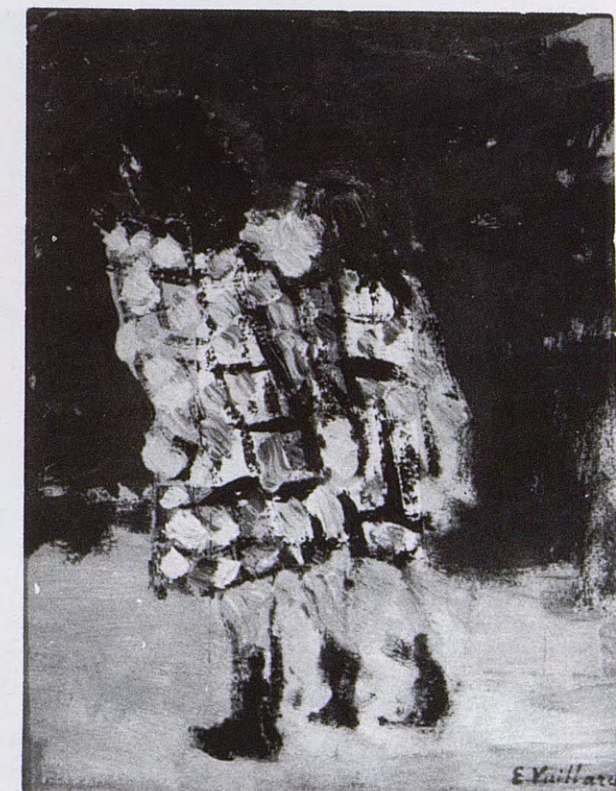
c. 1891  
 Oil on panel, 23.5 × 12.5 cm  
 Stamp 4, lower right  
**Southampton City Art Gallery,  
 Southampton (Great Britain),  
 Acc. no. 73/1963**

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Miss P. Grigg, Great Britain – Lefevre, London – Alan Roger, Scotland, 1956 – Lefevre, London – Arthur Tilden Jeffress, London, 1959 – Jeffress bequest to the Southampton City Art Gallery, 1963.

**Exhibition:** London, Lefevre, 1959, no. 26 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** *The Burlington Magazine* 107, no. 747, June 1965, pl. 66.

**Description:** *A rough sketch. The man is wearing a blue shirt and brown trousers, the boy a brown shirt and blue trousers. Neutral background.* (AC)



V-15

**V-15**  
**The Checked Dresses**

c. 1891-92  
 Oil on cardboard, 24 × 19.5 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower right  
 Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 28 May 1952, lot 109 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 28 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 55 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 14 – Stockholm, Galerie d'Art Latin, 1948, no. 3 [*Le Tablier à carreaux*] – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 12 [*Le Tablier à carreaux*, c. 1895].

**Bibliography:** Schweicher 1949, pp. 44, 59, 63, 93.

**Description:** *Against a uniformly dark-green background, two little girls wearing dresses patterned with large blue checks and seen from behind. The smaller of the two has a pink flower in her hair. A broadly executed sketch. A strip of heavy paper has been glued onto the back of the torn cardboard at the centre of the composition; a few printed words are still legible beneath the figures of the two girls.* (AC)





V-16

## V-16 Two Young Girls

c. 1891  
Oil on canvas, 39.5 × 31 cm  
Signed, lower right: *ev*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – M. Payelle, Paris – Renou et Poyet, Paris – E. J. Van Wisselingh, Amsterdam – David B. Findlay, Connecticut – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Le Barc de Bouteville, April–May 1893, no. 143 – Amsterdam, Van Wisselingh, 1955, no. 35 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich–Paris, 1993–94, p. 322, fig. 154.1.

**Description:** On a garden path lined with dark-hued foliage, a little girl with a long, blonde pigtail and

a blue dress pulls a second girl in a striped red dress by the waist. The posture of the latter, who has a hand on her hip, is curiously twisted.

It was apropos this sketch for *Young Girls Strolling* (V-17), presented at the Le Barc de Bouteville gallery's fourth exhibition, that Natanson declared: 'How attractive Monsieur Vuillard's two little girls are; he cannot continue to refuse his presence at exhibitions much longer, for one would be tempted to tax him with affectation – were one not so confident of the sincerity of his reserve.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thadée Natanson, *La Revue Blanche*, 4, no. 18, 15 April 1893.

## V-17 Young Girls Strolling

c. 1891  
Oil on canvas, 81 × 64.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection

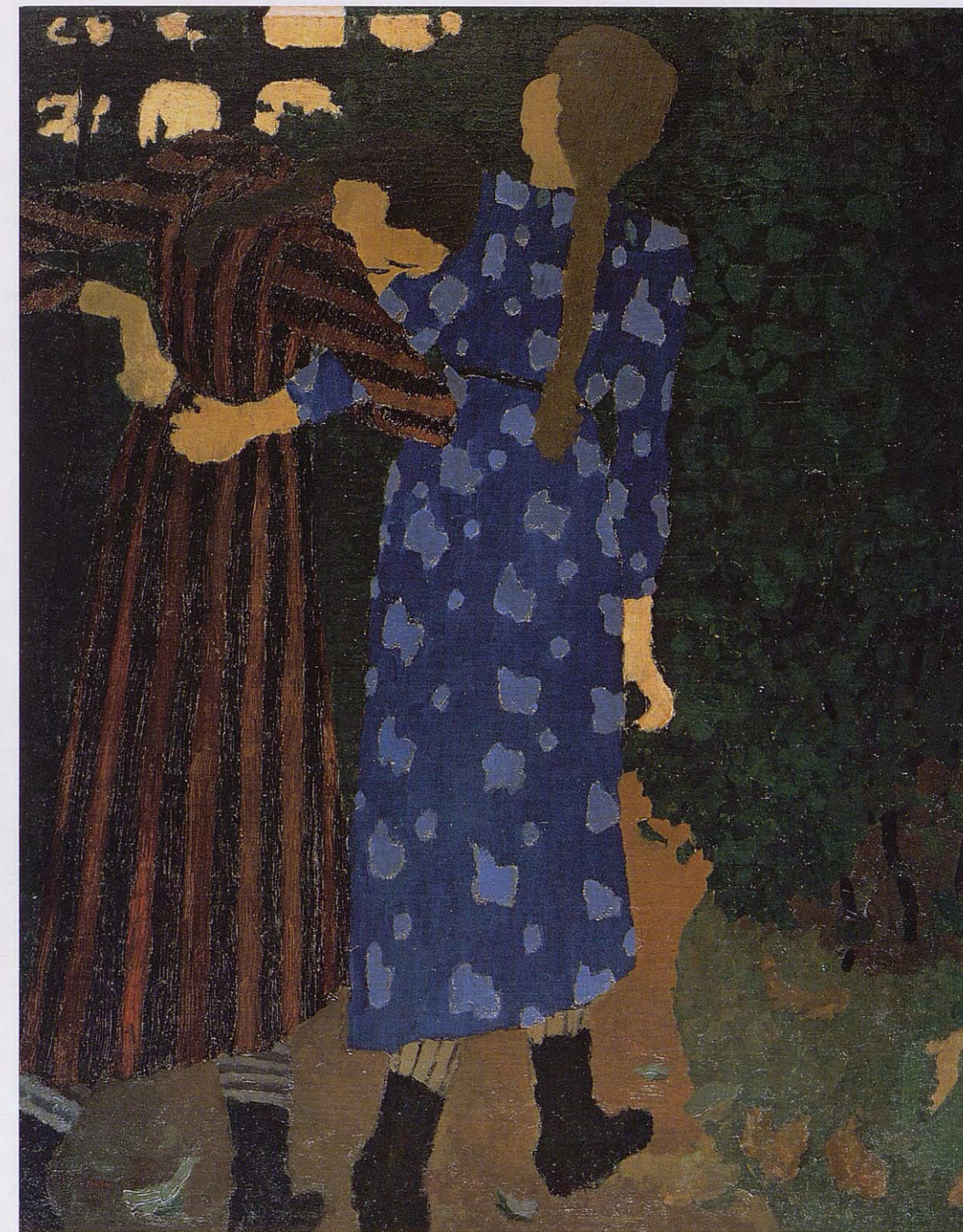
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York – Walter Ross, New York; Adelaide Ross-Stachelberg, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 17 May 1978, lot 47 (col. ill.) – Josefowitz Collection; on loan to the National Gallery, London, 1994–96 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 23 – London, Wildenstein, June 1948, no. 6 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 10 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 1 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1951, no. 338 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 167 [*Deux jeunes filles de dos*] – Cleveland–New York, 1954, pp. 17 (col. ill.), 100 – Buenos Aires–Santiago–Caracas, 1968, no. 18 (ill.) – Sydney–Melbourne–New York, 1975, no. 110 (ill.) – London, Royal Academy, 1979–80, no. 233 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1980, no. 145 (col. ill.) – Zurich–Paris, 1993–94, no. 154 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Schweicher 1949, p. 59 – Ritchie 1954, p. 12 – Dorival 1957, p. 21 – *Art News* 63, no. 5, Sept. 1964, p. 46 (col. ill.) – Preston 1971, fig. 15 – Russell, 1971b, pl. 5 – Georges 1982, p. 91 – Daniel 1984, p. 385, fig. 140 – Makarius 1989, p. 65, p. 79 (col. ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 26–27 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A variation on the previous entry, with different lighting. Two young girls with their arms around each other walk along a dark, ochre-coloured garden path surrounded by foliage. The girl on the left is wearing a brown and black striped dress; the one on the right, a blue dress with light-coloured motifs. Their hands and faces are schematized. The greys are offset by the splashes of light ochre on the left. (AC)

Two employees from Madame Vuillard's dressmaking studio are strolling through the Tuileries or a smaller public garden like that of the place Vintimille. During a brief moment of relaxation, they must have bumped into their employer's son, the one who is a painter and is forever observing them. They turn away from his prying eye, in an attitude that is portrayed time and again in Vuillard's work as the gesture *par excellence* of feminine modesty (see *Young Girl, Her Hand on a Doorknob*, IV-12). The railings through which the light gleams (or, rather,



V-17

through which a pale yellow building on the other side of the road can be glimpsed) are the same as those in *Little Girl in Front of Some Railings*, V-6. Their profiles are fleeting, but Vuillard presents a delicate token of friendship that makes up for the somewhat rigid posture of the two girls. Their smocks – which, appearances notwithstanding, are the true protagonists of the picture – are sufficiently raised to reveal the exquisite detail of the socks with contrasting stripes. On 2 April 1891, shortly before making this painting, the artist had jotted down some thoughts concerning the manner in which form *detaches itself* from the background:

'Forms appear before our eyes. We see them and they appear. Under what conditions? A form is distinguished i.e. exists separated from that which surrounds it; it is lighter or darker than that which exists around it; it is more or less luminous it is the feeling of this more or less that the painter expresses and depending on the degree of awareness on the one hand and of sincerity on the other, the painting will come into existence.'<sup>1</sup> Vuillard, who was engrossed in his *cloisonniste* period at the time, was obsessed by the emergence of form, though the solutions he found to that question were very different from those adopted by Ranson and Sérusier.

The stiffness of the attitudes, the insistent candour of the colour motifs (especially the bean motif – 'à la Viallat', as we would call it today – of the blue dress), the stylised foliage reminiscent of a theatre décor or the ochre-coloured path beneath the young girls' feet: everything in this magnificent composition suggests that Vuillard set out to compose a deliberately experimental work spiced with a gentle touch of humour.

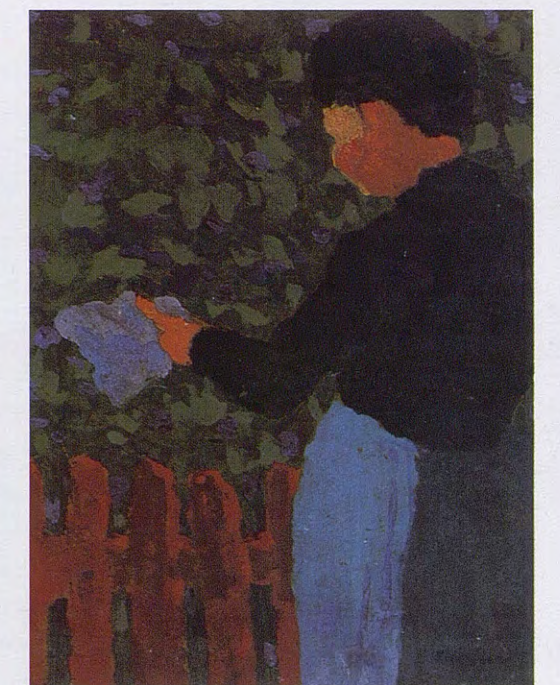
<sup>1</sup> E. V., *Journal*, I,2, 2 April 1891, fol. 32v.

## V-18 Woman Standing at a Red Gate

c. 1891–92  
Oil on panel, 22.2 × 17.1 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 30 March 1949, lot 19 (ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 16 March 1950, lot 50 (ill.) – Catherine Viviano Gallery, New York – Private collection, Northampton (Massachusetts) – Donation to the Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, 1977 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 15 Nov. 1984, lot 322 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A woman in a green dress, black blouse and blue apron, with vividly coloured face and hands, stands before a red gate; patches of blue sky can be seen through the foliage. (AC)



V-18





V-19



V-20



V-21



V-22

## V-19 to V-26

Studies for the Desmarais  
Overdoor Decorations

## V-19

The Dressmaking Studio – I  
(study for V-28.1)

1892

Oil on cardboard, varnished by the artist,  
10.5 × 26 cm

Stamp 4, lower right

Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – John Rewald, New York – Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection, France.

**Bibliography:** Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, pp. 326-327, fig. 158.2.

**Description:** Three figures in an interior, against a red background. (AC)

## V-20

The Dressmaking Studio – I  
(sketch for V-28.1)

1892

Oil on canvas, 15.5 × 32 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – David Findlay, New York, 1960; stolen from the gallery; found and returned to David Findlay, New York, 1993 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 17-18 Nov. 1998, lot 492 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Grey and red silhouettes in an interior framed by a mauve surround. (AC)

## V-21

The Dressmaking Studio – II  
(study for V-28.2)

1892

Oil on cardboard, varnished by the artist,  
10.5 × 26 cm

Stamp 4, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** To the left, a woman in a blue dress with red checks appears to be closing a door; to the right, a woman's silhouette outlined in grey. Red wall-paper and yellow curtains. (AC)

## V-22

The Dressmaking Studio – II  
(sketch for V-28.2)

1892

Oil on canvas, 47 × 115 cm

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York, c. 1949 – Walter Ross, New York – Mrs. Charles G. Stachelberg, New York – Private collection, New York and London – Sale, Christie's, New York, 30 April 1996, lot 40 (col. ill.) – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101 – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 7 (ill.) – University Park, The Pennsylvania State University, 1968, no. 20 (ill.) – Brooklyn, 1990 (not in cat.) – Chicago-New York, 2001, no. 31.

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, pp. 53, 55, 71, frontis. (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, p. 21, col. fig. 23 – Groom, exhib. cat., Chicago-New York, 2001, pp. 118 (col. ill.), 119.

This is a highly finished sketch for *The Studio II*. The women are painted in exactly the same poses as in the final version, but the fabrics of their clothing are all different. The seamstress standing next to the small child in a red smock and opening a door is shown here wearing a dress of black checks against an orange background, instead of the black corset and white dress of the final version. The girl in a blue dress standing next to her is all but absorbed into the surrounding welter of colours, whereas in the final version, her red dress stands out sharply, isolating her in the middle of the panel. Last but not least, the wave-like patterning of the chevron-shaped parquet floor imparts rhythm to the composition, setting the tempo for this mysterious dance of adolescent seamstresses.



V-23



V-24



V-25



V-26

## V-23

Gardening  
(study for V-28.3)

1892

Oil on cardboard, varnished by the artist,  
10.5 × 26 cm

Stamp 4, lower right

Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Mouradian et Valotton, Paris – Maurice Laffaille, Paris – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 2 March 1973, lot 52 (col. ill.) – Claude Bernard, Paris – Sale, Phillips, London, 1 Dec. 1986, lot 18 (col. ill.) – Galerie Berès, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 99 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Groom 1993, p. 25.

**Description:** On the left, behind a pot of large grey flowers, are two ladies dressed in brown; dark-hued foliage on the right. The ground is red. (AC)

## V-24

Patting the Dog  
(sketch for V-28.4)

1892

Oil on canvas, varnished by the artist,  
10.5 × 26 cm

Stamp 3, lower left

Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Harry M. Goldblatt, New York, 1967 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 18 Oct. 1984, lot 134 (col. ill.) – Collection Jean-Claude Bellier, Paris.

**Bibliography:** Groom 1993, p. 21, fig. 22.

**Description:** A woman dressed in red with a dog outside a yellow house. (AC)

## V-25

Nursemaids and Children in  
a Public Garden  
(study for V-28.5)

1892

Oil on cardboard, varnished by the artist,  
11.5 × 26 cm

Stamp 4, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arnoé, Paris – Baronne de Montesquiou-Fezensac, Neuilly-sur-Seine (France) – Sale, Hôtel des Ventes, Enghien-les-Bains, 12 Dec. 1982, lot 54 (col. ill.), bought in – Galerie Charles Nisenbaum, Paris – JPL Fine Arts, London – Mario Pinta Camargo, São Paulo (Brazil) – Richard Salmon, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 July 1992, lot 124 (col. ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Salzburg-London, 1991, no. 3 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Groom 1993, p. 31, col. fig. 44.

**Description:** Women viewed against a background of foliage with a patch of grey sky. (AC)

## V-26

The Game of Shuttlecock  
(study for V-28.6)

1892

Oil on cardboard, varnished by the artist,  
10.8 × 25.3 cm

Stamp 3, lower left

Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Harry M. Goldblatt, New York, 1967 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 18 Oct. 1984, lot 135 (col. ill.) – Collection Jean-Claude Bellier, Paris.

**Bibliography:** Groom 1993, p. 31, fig. 43.

**Description:** Figures surrounded by trees and lawns. (AC)

In this broadly painted sketch, the two main figures are viewed from behind in the same positions as in the final version, but there are splashes of bright blue sky (so bright as to suggest that the scene takes place on a summer's evening) and the yellow fronds of the trees reach into the foreground, whereas the final version presents the pale, imprecise depths of a garden in broad daylight.





V-27.1

### V-27.1 and V-27.2 Sketches for the Desmarais Overdoor Panels

Common provenance: Artist's studio – Private collection.

#### V-27.1

#### The Studio – I, Gardening, The Nursemaids

1892

Pastel and charcoal on paper,  
55.5 × 42 cm  
Stamp 3, upper right, centre right  
and lower right

#### V-27.2

#### The Studio – II, Patting the Dog, The Game of Shuttlecock

1892

Pastel and charcoal on paper,  
47 × 40.5 cm  
Stamp 3, upper right, centre right and  
lower right

These hitherto unpublished pastels are of great interest, as they allow us to place each of the six *Desmarais Panels* in its original position. The wooden panelling separating the designs is indicated in pale mauve. We also find, at the bottom of each sheet, the crucial detail of one door-frame over which three panels were arranged above each other, with 'Studios' at the top, 'Gardening' in the middle and 'Play' in the public gardens at the bottom. Everything is already in place, as far as one can tell from Vuillard's wiry line and mobile colouring, which seems to foreshadow Raoul Dufy's art by forty years. There are some differences in detail, however: the floor of the two *Studio panels*, for instance, is laid with parquet (as in the preliminary sketch, see V-20 and V-22), not tiles; and, in *The Game of Shuttlecock*, a net is sketched in the middle of the lawn. Nevertheless, these pastel drawings – masterpieces in their own right in terms of freedom of execution – appear to be the last sketches before the final version.



V-27.2

### V-28.1 to V-28.6 Overdoor Panels for Monsieur and Madame Paul Desmarais

1892

Private collection

Common provenance: Paul Desmarais, Paris – Private collection.

Common exhibitions: Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, nos. 66-71 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, nos. 32-37 (ill.) – Paris, 1993-94, p. 45, no. 158 (col. ill.).

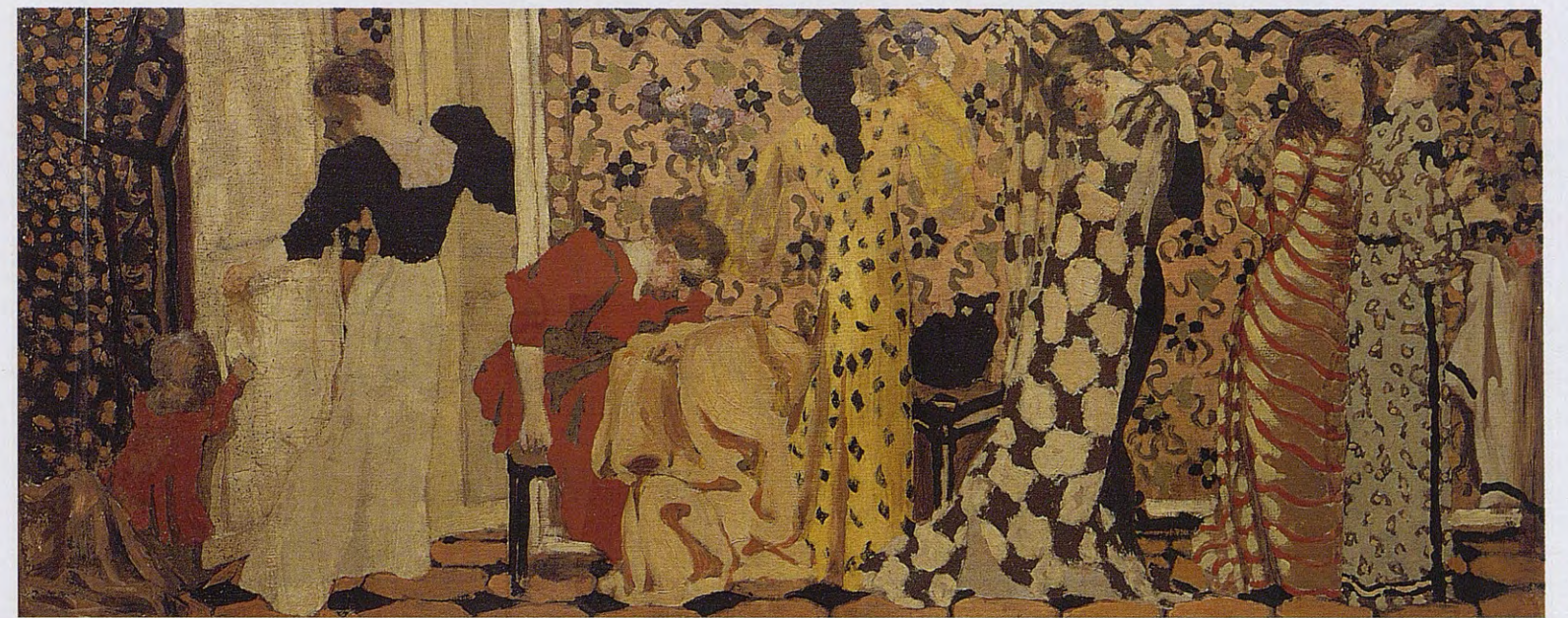
Common bibliography: Marx 1892a, 1892b, and 1892c – Segard 1914, pp. 289, 320 (no. 1) – Salomon 1945, p. 41 – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 33 (ill.), 120-121 – Roger-Marx 1948c, pp. 14, 60 (ill.) – Schweicher 1949, pp. 85, 104-105 – *Emporium* 131, no. 782, Feb. 1960, p. 52 (ill.) – Bacou 1964, pp. 193-194, 197-198 (col. ill.) – Dugdale 1965, pp. 94, 96, fig. 1 – 'Antologia', 1967, p. 362 (ill.) – Preston 1971, p. 38, fig. 44 – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, pp. 30-31, 34-35 (ill.), 51, 224 – Perucchi-Petri 1972, pp. 27, 34, 35, fig. 2 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 110-111, 120, 125-126, 129, col. fig. 68, fig. 79 – Mauner 1978, pp. 97, 104, 246, 301, no. 3 – Frèches-Thory 1979, p. 310, fig. 14 – Gold and Fildale 1980, p. 39 – Perucchi-Petri 1980, p. 273 – Oakley 1981, p. 11 – Georges 1982, pp. 97-99 – Daniel 1984, pp. 39-42, fig. 2 – Komanecky, exhib. cat., Washington D.C.-New Haven, 1984-85, p. 78 – Thomson 1988, pp. 36, 25-27 (col. pl.) – Warnod 1988, p. 33 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, pp. 102-103, 104-106 (col. ill.) – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 27 (col. ill.) – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, pp. 138, 143, 154 – Bernier 1991, pp. 190-191 (ill.) – Forgione 1992, pp. 41-43, 73, 91-92, 98-101, 107, 119-120 – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 30-31 (col. fig.) – Groom 1993, pp. 3, 19-34, 36-41, 45-46, 49-50, 85, 90, col. figs. 24-29 – Libby 1994, pp. 26-30 – Groom, exhib. cat., Chicago-New York, 2001, pp. 118-119 (col. ill.).

See plates next pages.





V-28.1



V-28.2



V-28.3



V-28.4



V-28.5



V-28.6



## V-28.1

## The Dressmaking Studio – I

1892

Oil on canvas, 48 × 117 cm

Private collection

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibitions] – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 18 (ill.) – Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 46 (col. ill.) – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 11 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 41 (col. ill.).

## V-28.2

## The Dressmaking Studio – II

1892

Oil on canvas, 48 × 117 cm

Private collection

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibitions] – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 19 (ill.) – Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 47 – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 12 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 41 (col. ill.).

## V-28.3

## Gardening

1892

Oil on canvas, 48 × 117 cm

Private collection

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibitions] – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 18 – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 41 (col. ill.).

## V-28.4

## Patting the Dog

1892

Oil on canvas, 48 × 117 cm

Private collection

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibitions] – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 19 – Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 48 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 41 (col. ill.).

## V-28.5

## Nursemaids and Children in a Public Garden

1892

Oil on canvas, 48 × 117 cm

Private collection

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibitions] – Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 49 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 41 (col. ill.).

## V-28.6

## The Game of Shuttlecock

1892

Oil on canvas, 48 × 117 cm

Private collection

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibitions] – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 41.

Less well-known than his three cousins at *La Revue Blanche*, Alexandre, Alfred and Thadée, Stéphane Natanson was an architect trained at the École des Beaux-Arts and a tireless promoter of Nabi art, especially that of Vuillard. It was he who was responsible for the commission of this decorative ensemble for the salon of Paul Desmarais' town-house at 43 rue de Lisbonne, a Second Empire-style building near the Parc Monceau. Desmarais had married Stéphane's sister, Léonie. A chemical engineer who specialised in the refining of fatty substances (the same field, oddly enough, as Marcel Kapferer; see XI-256), he represented that class of industrialist who, having recently amassed a private fortune, did not hesitate to commission avant-garde works of art at the instigation of young critics.<sup>1</sup> In a letter Stéphane Natanson wrote to Vuillard on 18 November 1892, we learn that the panels were finished by that date and had earned the artist – this, his first commission – 1,200 francs: 'You must have heard that I visited your good mother, to whom I entrusted the 800 francs owed you for your panels. That is the correct sum that you were still owed, was it not, dear friend?

A hundred francs paid by Mr. Paul Desmarais from Étretat, 300 francs handed over by myself, plus these 800 francs makes 1,200 francs, that is, the price we agreed upon. That's one job settled, [so] on to another. I mean, let us talk a bit about the screen... Your panels look very good, now that everything is almost finished and their owner, a little surprised at first, will get used to them and will end up liking them as we do. There's already one, the one with the dog, that he likes a lot.'<sup>2</sup>

At that precise juncture, Vuillard was travelling, somewhat against his will, with his future brother-in-law, Kerr-Xavier Roussel, who was fleeing the claims made on him by a young girl, Caroline, whom he had placed in an awkward position. The screen of which Stéphane Natanson speaks is clearly *The Dressmakers' Screens* (V-32.1 to V-32.5) a work narrowly connected with the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels*. While he was abroad, Vuillard seriously considered entrusting the screen either to Bonnard or to Maurice Denis.

We now know for certain that this decorative ensemble was painted for the large salon of the Desmarais home, and not for the bathroom, as Roseline Bacou once claimed. In a letter addressed to Jan Verkade and dated June 1892, Paul Ranson remarked: 'Vuillard is decorating a very chic salon with overdoors'.<sup>3</sup> The main salon was served by two double doors and had a ceiling some fourteen and a half feet high. The two preparatory pastel sketches, V-27.1 and V-27.2, hitherto unpublished, clearly indicate the configuration of the decorative ensemble and the order in which the panels were presented, an aspect that could only be guessed at in the past: the paired panels depicting the dressmaking studio were situated at the top; those depicting the terrace outside the house in the middle and those depicting a game of shuttlecock or a group of nursemaids at the bottom, just above the door. It had previously been supposed, quite naturally, that each panel (measuring approximately 48 × 117 cm) was a self-sufficient overdoor or *trumeau* (to employ the term more commonly employed by Vuillard's contemporaries).<sup>4</sup> Vuillard, then, superposes three decorative panels which mirror one another

from door to door, passing from a crowded domestic interior that is 'all surface' at the top, to the pale, soft-focus depths of the two panels at the bottom. The effect produced in Desmarais' gigantic salon was not, therefore, one of horizontal continuity between scenes, but the vertical effect afforded by two parallel groups of panels nearly six and a half feet high descending from busy surface to spacious background.

That being said, there are certain horizontal continuities between each pair of panels. The richly coloured wall is the same in both dressmaking studios, each of which is flanked by a curtain – one to the left, one to the right – suggesting the wings of a stage. In *Gardening* (V-28.3) and *Patting the Dog* (V-28.4), the tiled floor and the black bunting-like band that stands out sharply against the pink sky behind the house provide spatial links connecting the two panels. The children playing in the public gardens are likewise connected by a continuous horizon, a device Vuillard later employs in the *Public Gardens* (V-39.1 to V-39.9). Does this astonishing superposing of one panel above another mean that, in 1892, Vuillard did not dare to tackle large formats yet, as he was to do two years later in the magnificent *Square de la Trinité* (V-37)? Perhaps. We should bear in mind, however, that, though he had not yet travelled to Italy, he knew from his reading and from history of art courses of the effect produced by separate panels placed one above the other in the churches of Padua, Assisi and Florence, where the frescos of Giotto and Simone Martini recount the horrors of the damned in Hell, the anxieties of Purgatory and the unspeakable bliss of those souls fortunate enough to have ascended to Paradise. Still, when the Desmarais moved in 1903 to a new town-house built for them by Stéphane Natanson at 98 avenue Malakoff, the panels were reinstalled, probably in a single continuous row, in Madame Desmarais' bathroom.<sup>5</sup>

In the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels*, Vuillard's first great decorative ensemble, two influences are clearly visible, as Claude Roger-Marx, following unexpectedly in the footsteps of Viollet-le-Duc, perceived: 'The lessons of the East, whether ancient or modern, appear in

no way to contradict those handed down by Romanesque or Gothic art; quite the contrary, it has become increasingly apparent that despite the remoteness, despite the differences in epoch and civilisation, there was on both sides the same freshness of imagination, the same tendency towards simplification, an intuitive but necessary simplification that is admirably suited to decorative effects. Never have the expressive value of contour, the power of unified tones and flat colours and the meaning of harmonies been better appreciated than at present – and the reason for this proper understanding is to be found, without the shadow of a doubt, in the parallel culture in the aesthetics of the Orient and the Middle Ages'.<sup>6</sup> The influence of Japanese art on this decorative cycle – and on the two panels of *The Dressmaking Studio*, in particular – has already been emphasized in a first-rate commentary by Ursula Perucchi. For our part, we detect a still more pronounced Trecento influence, visible not only in the dimensions of the canvases (which are very similar to those of a medieval Italian predella), but also in the miniature-fresco-like decorative effects that Vuillard seems to have drawn – somewhat unusually for the period – from the same sources as Puvis de Chavannes. We have already commented on the striking resemblance between the women in the two *Dressmaking Studio* panels – from which Vuillard has deliberately eliminated his mother – and the geishas depicted by Kunisada and Utamaro, not least on account of the Oriental luxuriance of the fabrics, which stand out sharply against the flowers and tracery of the wallpaper. But no one, it seems, has thought of linking them to a fresco much commented on by art-historians at the turn of the last century, Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Allegory of Good Government* in the Palazzo Comunale of Siena (see ill.). In a detail of this famous and politically pointed decorative ensemble, a group of sumptuously attired women seen in profile have linked hands in a dance symbolizing the joys of life. The similarity to the two *Dressmaking Studio* panels is disconcerting. (The tiled floor on which Vuillard places his figures is likewise Italianate, let us note.) Furthermore, the two *Gardening* scenes, with their child-like



Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Allegory of Good Government* (detail), c. 1340, fresco, Palazzo Comunale, Siena.

positioning of the wall of the house plumb in the middle of the double composition and the grace of the almost monumental figures framed in the two doorways, are reminiscent of not a few medieval predella panels, whether by Sassetta, Fra Angelico or, more aptly still, Giovanni Francesco da Rimini in *The Charity of St Nicholas of Bari* (see ill.), which Vuillard will have been able to admire at the Louvre during his time as a student at the École des Beaux-Arts. In predellas of this kind, figures are presented within a schematised architectural framework behind which lies a stylized landscape partly visible through the opening of a door. We should also note that, in the same year that the *Des-*



Giovanni Francesco da Rimini, *The Charity of St. Nicholas of Bari*, fifteenth century, wood, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

*marais Overdoor Panels* were painted, Maurice Denis, who had long been in thrall to the 'beautiful icons' of Italy, painted the *Four Panels for a Young Girl's Room* (see ill.).<sup>7</sup> No less heavily inspired by the art of the Trecento, they will certainly have influenced Vuillard's own decorative ensemble, not least for their formal qualities and the delicacy with which the figures are placed within the interlacing design. Unlike his fellow-painter, however, Vuillard did not bring into play a Symbolism of suspended time, but an allegorical attention shot through with everyday life, in the style of the Trecento.

This passion for the Italian primitives was common to all the Nabi artists, if we con-





Maurice Denis, *April*, one of *Four Panels for a Young Girl's Room*, 1891-92, oil on canvas, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo.

sider that in 1885 (he was fifteen then) Maurice Denis confided to his Journal: 'I borrowed a booklet at the town hall containing the life and works of Fra Angelico' (5 August 1885);<sup>8</sup> then a little further on: 'Painting is essentially a religious and Christian art. If this character has been lost in our impious century, it must be recovered. And the way to do this is by honouring the aesthetic of Fra Angelico, who alone is truly Catholic; who alone answers to the aspirations of pious, mystic souls who love God' (5 January 1886).<sup>9</sup> On a visit to London during his flight north with Roussel, Vuillard confided to Jan Verkade: 'The beastly names you must call the Nabis who go traipsing round Holland! We have been swept off our feet by the painting in London, Lippi, Angelico. And [think] what there must be in Italy! I'm not surprised by your letters and by your determination to stay' (November 1892).<sup>10</sup> A few days later, Mögens Ballin wrote to Vuillard from Siena: 'Yes. Yes, I admire old masters like Raphael, Leonardo, Botticelli, etc., but I admire the primitives, especially those from Siena, far more'.<sup>11</sup>

As predella panels that embody a secular modernity, the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels* immediately established Vuillard as an original and sensitive *peintre-décorateur*. We know how at home he was with the world of fabrics and fittings that overran his own apartment; yet the two *Dressmaking Studios* present the slow waltz – a Japanese-like *pas-sacaglia* – of a dozen women swathed in fabrics adorned with psychedelic designs. The space in which they stand with their hips out has a hypnotic density. The elegance of their poses owes no more to reality than does a 'mural' by Puvis de Chavannes or a sculpted frieze by Joseph Bernard. The studio

brought to life by Vuillard is a *dream*, and the little girl in the red blouse who enters by one door and goes out by another merely adds to the unreality of the scene. The exquisite tenderness that emanates from *Patting the Dog* or *The Game of Shuttlecock*, part and parcel of the sympathy he feels for children tottering about in an adult world, speaks volumes for his longing for eternal youth, for a cocooned and protected existence in which beauty arises from suspended time.

<sup>1</sup> 'Where is that who is industrialist willing to call upon the precious collaboration of these *décorateurs*, to take from them a little of the time they devote to producing far too many paintings?', in Maurice Denis, 'Pour les jeunes peintres', *Art et Critique*, 20 February 1892, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Stéphane Natanson to Vuillard, 18 Nov. 1892, Salomon archives.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Mauner 1978, p. 280.

<sup>4</sup> 'I hear with pleasure that your *trumeaux* are almost finished, after causing us some tricky moments. Which reassures me as to the final result, because I believe you incapable of making a hash of things, as happens frequently to me.' (Letter from Pierre Bonnard to Vuillard, 19 Sept. 1892, Salomon archives.)

<sup>5</sup> Groom 1993, pp. 36-40.

<sup>6</sup> Roger Marx, 'L'Art décoratif et les symbolistes', *Le Voltaire*, 23 August 1892.

<sup>7</sup> Maurice Denis, *Four Panels for a Young Girl's Bedroom*, 1891-1892, oil on canvas: [*September*] 38 × 61 cm, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; [*October*] 38 × 61 cm, collection of M. and Mme. Arthur G. Altschul; [*April*] 37.5 × 61 cm, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo; [*July*] 30 × 60 cm, Fondation Rau pour le Tiers-Monde, Zurich.

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Denis, *Journal I*, 1957, p. 36.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted by Mauner 1978, p. 283.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Mögens Ballin to Vuillard, 4 December 1892, Salomon archives.



V-29

## V-29

## Child and Nursemaid in a Garden

(preliminary sketch for the Desmarais Screen)

1892

Pastel and charcoal on paper,

19.7 × 28.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 30 Nov. 1988, lot 419 (col. ill.) – Galerie Berès, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 103 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Groom 1993, p. 35.



V-30

## V-30

## Gardening

(preliminary sketch for the Desmarais Screen)

1892

Pastel on paper, 41.3 × 57.5 cm

Stamp 3, lower right

Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Baronne de Montesquiou-Fezensac, Neuilly-sur-Seine (France), 1957 – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas, Paris, 1982.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 94 – New Brunswick, The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1988, no. 157 – Lyons, 1990, no. 43 (col. ill.) – Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 104 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, p. 173 (col. ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, p. 120 (ill.) – Groom 1993, pp. 34-35, col. fig. 53.

## V-31

## Desmarais Screen

(study)

1892

Pastel on paper, 24 × 31.5 cm

Stamp 3, lower right

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Florence, 1998, no. 91, p. 128 (col. ill.); and Montreal, 1998, no. 174, p. 55. (col.ill.).



V-31



## V-32.1 to V-32.5

## Desmarais Screen

1892-93

Glue-based distemper on linen, mounted on canvas and with a painted frame, dimensions unknown

Signed and dated, upper left of right-hand vertical panel: *e vuillard / 93*

The upper left-hand panels and their frames have been lost; four of the five vertical panels remain intact; the right-hand vertical panel has also been preserved (V-32.5), but has been separated from the rest.

**Common provenance:** Commissioned in 1892 by Paul Desmarais, Paris, 450 F (through Stéphane Natanson) – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 25 May 1945, lot 36 – Jean Lenthal, Paris – Truffaut, Paris – Dismantled in 1946.

**Common bibliography:** Segard 1914, p. 320 – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 120-121 – Komanecy, exhib. cat., Washington D.C.-New Haven, 1984-85, p. 78, fig. 81 – Thomson 1988, p. 36, fig. 24 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, pp. 167 (ill.), 170 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 26 (ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 28-29 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, pp. 34-36, 39, 43, 44, fig. 52, col. ill. 49, 51.

## V-32.1

## The Dressmaker

1892-93

Glue-based distemper on linen, mounted on canvas, 95 × 38 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, Switzerland

## V-32.2

## The Fitting

1892-93

Glue-based distemper on linen, mounted on canvas, 120 × 38 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, Switzerland

## V-32.3

## The Apprentice Dressmakers

1892-93

Glue-based distemper on linen, mounted on canvas, 120 × 38 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, Switzerland

## V-32.4

## The Fallen Spool of Thread

1892-93

Glue-based distemper on linen, mounted on canvas, 95 × 38 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance for the four panels:** [see common provenance] – O'Hana, London – Lefevre, London, 1952 – Anne Burnett Tandy, Fort Worth (Texas), July 1952 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 5 Nov. 1981, lot 210 (col. ill.) – Galerie Bellier, Paris, Galerie Berès, Paris, and Jan Krugier, Geneva – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibitions of the four panels:** Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 25 – Paris, Bellier, 1990, p. 36 (col. ill.) – Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 102 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 43, pp. 64-65 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 217 (col. ill.) – Montréal, Musée des Beaux Arts, 1995, no. 462, pp. 212-213 (ill.).

## V-32.5

## Cat with a Ball of Wool

1892-93

Glue-based distemper on linen mounted on canvas, 68.5 × 37 cm

Signed and dated, upper left: *e vuillard / 93*

Private collection

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 15 April 1970, lot 62 (col. ill.) – Charles Medworth, United States – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 26.

During his enforced exile in Belgium and Holland with Kerr-Xavier Roussel in autumn 1892, Vuillard had thought he would be unable to execute this screen, as it had to be

delivered to Léonie Desmarais by the end of the year. In a letter already quoted regarding the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels* (V-28.1 to V-28.6), Stéphane Natanson wrote to Vuillard: 'I mean, let's talk a bit about the screen; if, as I heard from your mother, you came back sooner that you had hoped, you might still be able to complete it before New Year's Day. That really is the final deadline. Madame Desmarais will be obliged to receive guests as of that day. And it is vital that by that date her entire installation be finished. Write and let me know what you think and I will do what I can to make sure you can do it, since I think it would suit you'.<sup>1</sup> On 9 November, Vuillard had written to Bonnard, in a letter which betrayed his agitation: 'Please take charge of my business and I will tell you everything later. 1/ the screen: please do it I am writing to Thadée and to Stéphane who will come and talk it over with you'.<sup>2</sup> Vuillard returned to Paris on 3 December, at which time he presented an initial project to Paul Desmarais (V-31), who gave it his approval: 'The screen has been seen and my brother-in-law finds it highly original and wants you to paint it. You can set to work, then. I am at your service if you need me to order the wood'.<sup>3</sup> The screen, however, was still not finished by January 1893, and the smallest panel, *Cat with a Ball of Wool*, is inscribed: *e vuillard / 93*.

*The Desmarais Screen* employs one of the strangest formats ever tackled by Vuillard, being composed of five panels of different sizes, asymmetrically deployed. It was not until Antoni Gaudí and his generation arrived on the scene (see ill.), followed by Giacomo Balla and the Futurists, that comparable screens would be seen, before being popularised by the exponents of Art Deco, Eileen Grey foremost among them. Unlike Bonnard's *Women in a Garden* (1891),<sup>4</sup> the *Desmarais Screen* is difficult to break down into separate panels (though this is exactly what has been done!), since there is a clear decorative and narrative continuity from one panel to the next, even if Vuillard abandoned his original idea – much more radical – in which you seem to be viewing the two women through a window and the compartmentalization appears to have no effect upon the distribution of the masses and the bodies (see the projects for *Child and*



V-32.1 à V-32.5

*Nursemaid in a Public Garden* and *Garden- ing*, V-29 and V-30). Here, we see a group of seamstresses, cousins of those who appear in the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels* (V-28.1 to V-28.6), only presented on a much larger scale. A year later, when composing his virtuoso *Public Gardens* (V-39.1 to V-39.9), Vuillard would think back on this bold undertaking, which in hindsight caused him some surprise: 'It makes me think of some of my large compositions with figures [*machines*] ... whatever the object. It's the subject that is everything. And Denis coming out with that thought: it's enough to enlarge a small drawing. In con-



Antoni Gaudí, *Screen*, 1909, oak and 'cathedral glass'. Private collection.

nection with Michelangelo. And lastly, the example of Forain at the café Riche. And myself in my screen for Madame Desmarais. I did it without thinking! Only now do I realise this'.<sup>5</sup> The work is painted on a length of fabric, somewhat in the manner of Bonnard's *The Peignoir*,<sup>6</sup> as a result of this, the brushwork, especially that of the little red checks on the dress of the spinner who is seated with her back to the viewer, is of almost gossamer-like delicacy. The surface of the fabric seems almost to have been 'stroked' on. The palette, meanwhile, is far more subdued than that of the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels* (V-28.1 to V-28.6). As in a medieval painting, the women are placed in the foreground and the floor rises so as to accentuate the frontal perspective of the screen. Unfortunately, the structure on which the different panels were mounted (see ill.) was lost during pillaging carried out in the wake of the German occupation in 1940, and the smallest of the panels, *Cat Playing with a Ball of Wool*, was separated from the rest of the ensemble. The screen is not only one of

Vuillard's first undisputed successes in decorative art, but also one of the high points of his work done in a more Symbolist vein. The bodies seem to dissolve even as the eye constructs them; the two women seated facing us in the background resemble Picasso's absinthe drinkers. Looking at these seamstresses grouped together in a manner even stranger than that of the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels*, we are reminded of the spinners in the second act of the *The Flying Dutchman*, and, even more – on account of the thread that runs between them – of the Norns in the *Twilight of the Gods*, mistresses of a blind destiny.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Stéphane Natanson to Vuillard, 18 Nov. 1892, Salomon archives.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Vuillard to Pierre Bonnard, 9 Nov. 1892, Salomon archives.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Stéphane Natanson to Vuillard, 3 Dec. 1892, Salomon archives.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre Bonnard, *Women in a Garden*, 1891, four panels, oil on paper, mounted on canvas, each panel 160 × 48 cm, private collection.

<sup>5</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 16 July 1894, I.2, fol. 44r.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bonnard, *The Peignoir, Woman Seen from Behind*, c. 1890, oil on fabric, 154 × 54 cm, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris.





V-33

### V-33 In the Garden

c. 1891  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on canvas,  
24.5 × 32.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 5 Nov. 1981, lot 199 (col. ill.), bought in – Lefevre, London – Jean-Claude Bellier, Paris and Jan Krugier, Geneva, 1992 – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Christie's, 1968, no. 34 (ill.) – London, Lefevre, 1984, no. 19 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 32, p. 60 (col. ill.) – Gifu, Museum of Fine Arts, 1993, no. 179, p. 102 (ill.) – Florence, 1998, no. 60, p. 99 (col. ill.), and Montreal, 1998, no. 168, p. 49 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Preston 1971, pp. 68, 69 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 65.

Long referred to by the title *The Third-Class Carriage*, doubtless because of its resemblance to Daumier's well-known variations on that theme, this picture was quite rightly renamed *Scene in a Garden* at the 1990 Lyons retrospective. Two old men, one of whom is holding a pair of crutches, are seated on a bench in the shade of a large tree. Are we looking at the courtyard of the building in the rue Saint-Honoré (it seems rather unlikely), a corner of the Tuileries gardens (the brightly coloured bands running along the wall in the background suggest the kind of lightweight structure found in public gardens; a piece of fencing, say, round a Punch and Judy show or a merry-go-round?) or a visit to some neighbours of *Tante Saurel* in Créteil? In reality, it is of no great importance. What particularly affects us is the virtuoso contrast between the luminous background and the three figures who, with the exception of the child (touched by a delicate shaft of light), are presented almost as silhouettes.

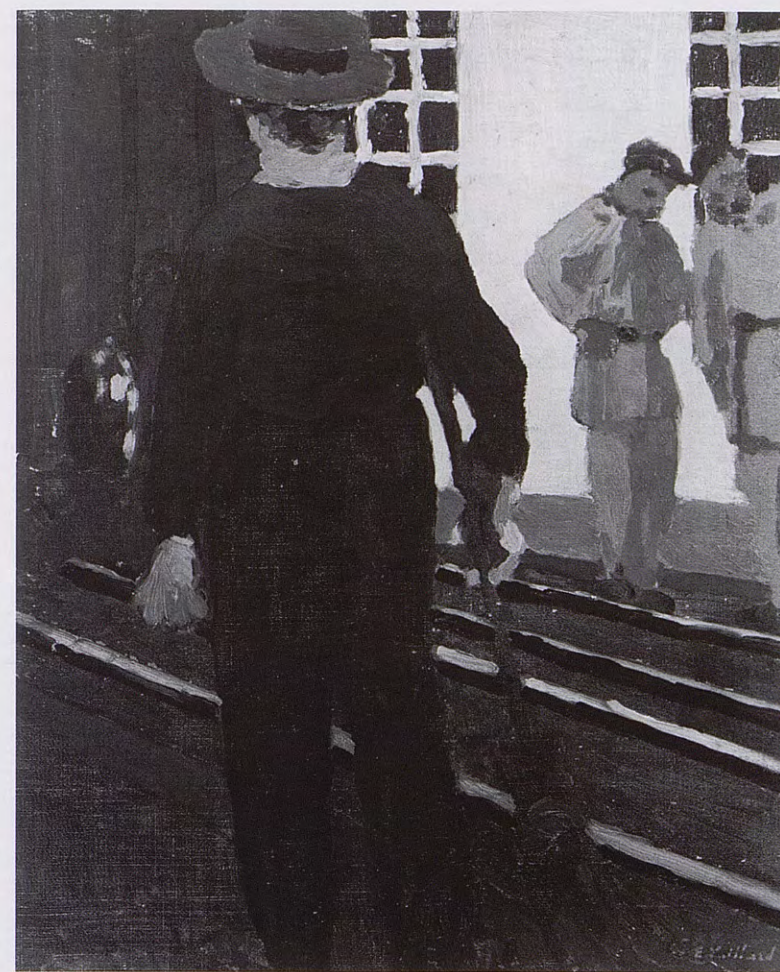
The style of this painting may be compared to that of *Portrait of Lugné-Poe* (III-25, 1891). The muddle over the title indicates how hard it is to interpret a picture in which the interlocking of forms overrides more strictly narrative considerations. Vuillard here puts into practice Maurice Denis' saying, 'The artist, placed before nature or, rather, before the emotion it furnishes him with, must translate it with excess'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Denis 1922, p. 179.

### V-34 Railway Sweeper

c. 1891-92  
Oil on canvas, 40.5 × 32.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Private collection, New York, 1953.



V-34

**Exhibition:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 40 (ill., *Railroad Station*), 101.

**Bibliography:** Potter 1984, no. 71 (ill.).

**Description:** Two railwaymen dressed in blue work clothes stand before a sunlit yellow wall, while a third figure, wearing darker clothes, is shown à contre-jour with his back to the spectator. The railway tracks, edged with pink reflections, fade into the dark on the left. (AC)

The railwaymen have been quickly sketched, their silhouettes standing out sharply against a smooth yellow wall. This is a highly 'synthesized' vision of France under the Third Republic, and, like all Vuillard's work, does not aim to be 'realistic', nor does it have any social message to put across.



V-35

### V-35 Silhouette of a Woman in Front of a Trellis

1892  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on canvas,  
27.8 × 18 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left: *ev 92*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Claude Bernheim de Villers, Paris – Bernheim de Villers sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 6 Dec. 1930, lot 38 (ill.), 35,500 F – Reid & Lefevre, London, c. 1931 – Jacques Seligmann, New York, 27 July 1933 – Mrs. Emily Milliken Lambert, Paris (Virginia), c. 1938; Emily Milliken Lambert estate, Washington D.C. – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 15 Nov. 1984, lot 318 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1903, no. 7 – Chicago, Art Institute, 1938-39, no. 40 – Washington D.C., Phillips Memorial Gallery, 1939, no. 9.

**Description:** A woman in an apron and a white bonnet stepping down from the forecourt of a house. (JS)

Might this be *Tante Saurel*'s garden at Créteil, one of the models Vuillard used when composing the two gardening scenes in the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels*? (see V-28.3 and V-28.4).





V-36

### V-36 Electoral Meeting

1893

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 36 x 44 cm

Signed, upper right: *ev*

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Mrs. Benno C. Schmidt, New York, 1965 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Toulouse, Salons de *La Dépêche*, 1894, no. 88.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 80 – Georges 1982, p. 70 – Eckert Boyer 1998, p. 107, fig. 49.

This painting featured in an exhibition organized between May and June 1894 in the offices of the Toulouse newspaper *La Dépêche*, directed at the time by Arthur Huc and Albert Sarraut. Under the pen-name Homodei, Huc, who was a close friend of the artist, painted a flattering picture of the *Meeting*: '[Vuillard] supremely masters his palette and brush, as is proved by his *Electoral Meeting*, in which, with only a few splashes of colour and without labouring the drawing, the

painter has given us the sensation of an incredibly swarming crowd'.<sup>1</sup> The period was rich in political events: this was the time of anarchist attacks (the bomb thrown by Auguste Vaillant's in the *Chambre des Députés* dates from December 1893). However, the production of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* at the *Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord* on 10 November 1893 might also have been a source of inspiration. The figure with a red cravat standing at the centre of the group would appear to confirm this theatrical interpretation, in which case the painting could be read as an illustration of Act IV, during which Doctor Stockman is accused of poisoning the town's hot springs by the crowd that has gathered in the town-hall. In defence of himself, he throws down the gauntlet to his detractors. 'Truth never lies with the majority. The minority is always right'. He is then unanimously declared an enemy of the people.

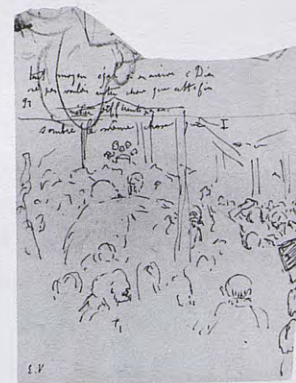
The theatre programme designed by Vuillard is somewhat similar to the painting, though the painting, it must be said, is not organized like a stage-set. And this is where the problem lies, for, in focusing upon the Ibsen play, we are overlooking one crucial detail: Vuillard

himself gave this picture the title of *Electoral Meeting*, whereas Act IV of the play presents a meeting in which Doctor Stockman is delivered up to the judgement of his fellow townspeople; it cannot properly be described as an election. The artist, moreover, has left us two



E. V., first idea for *Electoral Meeting*, 1890-91, pen and brown ink on paper, 17.6 x 22 cm. Private collection.

pen and ink drawings that can be assigned to 1890 or 1891 (see ill.) – long before he had come across Ibsen's plays, in other words – one of which depicts a political meeting, the other



E. V., sketch for *Electoral Meeting*, 1890-91, pen and brown ink on paper, 22 x 17.6 cm. Private collection.

a particularly stormy session at the Palais-Bourbon. For all his natural reserve, Vuillard was anything but an artist locked in his ivory tower (see *The Demonstration*, II-121). His friends at *La Revue Blanche* were close to anarchist circles, and the chief commissioner of the Paris police, the préfet Lépine, for a long time banned the staging of *An Enemy of the People*. To sum up, this small painting by Vuillard testifies to a period of political turmoil from which the artist did not hold aloof, having found a suitable outlet for his political convictions in the stage-productions. In support of this, it is worth quoting a passage from Vuillard's *Journal* for 27 July 1894 in which he speaks of this matter as a subject of observation: 'To tell the truth, it is not so much the observations that I fail to make in the presence of any object (electoral meeting, land-

scape and mainly other things, with the exception of last year and the small painting) that seems difficult to me as imagining them.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Homodei [Arthur Huc], 'Nos Expositions', *La Dépêche*, 21 May 1894, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> As P. Eckert Boyer does in *Artists and the Avant-Garde Theater in Paris, 1887-1900*, National Gallery of Art, 1998, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> E. V., *Journal*, I.2, fol. 46v.

### V-37

#### Square de la Trinité

1894 (reworked in 1908)

Glue-based distemper on canvas, 211.8 x 159.5 cm

Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The William B. Jaffe and Evelyn A.J. Hall Collection, 600.1959

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 43 [*Le Square*] – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 16702), 1,020 F – Wildenstein, New York, 27 August 1910, 2,500 F – William B. Jaffe, New York – Mrs. Evelyn A. J. Hall – Gift, subject to usufruct, from Mr. William B. Jaffe and Mrs. Evelyn A. J. Hall to The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1959.

**Exhibitions:** Berlin, Secession, 1909, no. 257 (ill.) – Düsseldorf, Städtischer Kunstpalast, 1910, no. 184 (ill.) – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 37 (col. ill.), 101 – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1955, p. 21; and 1958, p. 52 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** *Art et Décoration* 28, Oct. 1920, p. 99 (ill.) – Escholier 1937, p. 19 (ill.) – Chastel 1946, pp. 37 (ill.), 52, – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 121, 123, 146 (ill.); and 1948c, pl. 18 – *GBA* 42, nos. 1014-1015, July-August 1953, p. 33 (ill.), fig. 3 – Ritchie 1954, p. 20 – *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* 22, no. 4, summer 1955, pp. 16 (ill.), 35, no. 156 – Courthion 1957, p. 70 (col. ill.) – Dorival 1957, p. 22 – *Saturday Review*, 13 April 1957, p. 17 (ill.) – *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin*, supplement 26, Jan.-Dec. 1958, p. 23 – Salomon 1961, p. 55 (ill.) – Bacou 1964, p. 196 – Dugdale 1965, p. 97 – Preston 1971, pp. 82, 83 (col. ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, pp. 50-51, 229, no. 30 (?) (ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 103 – Groom 1993, pp. 43, 44-46, 69, 101, 145, col. fig. 63.

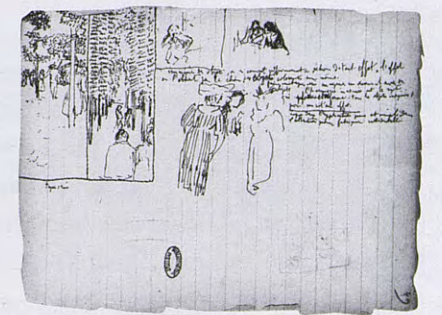
This is indeed a preliminary sketch for the central panel that was to become *Conversation* (V-39.4) in the nine panels commis-



V-37

sioned for Alexandre Natanson's townhouse in the avenue du Bois. Nothing of a factual nature can be found to bear out Gloria Groom's otherwise attractive hypothesis whereby this panel was actually commissioned by Thadée Natanson to celebrate his marriage with Misia.<sup>1</sup> A careful reading of Vuillard's *Journal*, which is particularly prolix in 1894 regarding the composition of the *Public Gardens*, suggests, on the contrary, that the panel is a project the painter toyed with for quite some time before abandoning it. A sketch of two women crossing paths in the

middle of the square de la Trinité can be found on a loose sheet opposite 21 and 30



E. V., *Journal*, I.2, fol. 49r (August 1894).



August, where the painter notes: 'In the afternoon finally driven to distraction by that fit of minutiae which is always the cause of this despair, I go to the Tuileries and recover as though by enchantment on the day when I feel most desperate the emotions that guided me at the beginning of my work' (see ill.). There is a good chance, then, that he sketched them in the Tuileries and later worked them into *The Square*. We can conclude from this that the various canvases were composed over the same period and suffered a similar fate.

The square de la Trinité is clearly recognizable in the painting, with the start of the rue de Chateaudun in the background right



E. V., sketch for Square de la Trinité, 1894, pen and brown ink on paper, 63.8 x 49.1 cm. Private collection.

and, on the left, a building in the rue Blanche. It would have taken Vuillard only two or three minutes to reach the square de



E. V., Journal, I.2, fol. 45r. (23 July 1894).

la Trinité from the studio he shared with Lugné-Poe and Bonnard at 28 rue Pigalle. In a pen and ink drawing (see ill.) that can be dated to July 1894, he sketches a closer view of the buildings around the square. In his Journal for 23 July (see ill.), he sketches the balustrade leading down from the church of La Trinité, along with three poses for the nursemaid who later appears in the

foreground of the painting. The following day (24 July), he writes of this figure: 'I walk down to the square. The same woman as yesterday came to sit on my bench. a little troubled. dress with small checks, folds without suppleness, like paper, black blouse, old folds without curves. white pinafore. quality of folds small and dry, hair like damp seaweed, hard, matt colour, purplish mouth today. the child pale sad with the weather. silky hair, hard white linen. Orange-red ribbon. Weather overcast. Spot bushier than I had thought. Purplish flowers. Impression'.<sup>2</sup> Vuillard, we sense, soaks up the sensations around him, before going on to reconstruct his own reality, drained of all immediate subjectivity.

The profusion of small, interlocking groups are in the artist's best vein, as are the somewhat comical poses struck by the figures (the figure in the centre resembles Tristan Bernard, though Vuillard can only have met him at the Lycée Condorcet when he was still known as Paul Bernard). This painting is rather different from the other nine panels made for Alexandre Natanson, the figures being more monumental and bunched together in the foreground; the composition, furthermore, is not only more crowded but, strangely, less dense with pigment than the other panels. As André Chastel observed, it is as 'close-knit as a tapestry ... all of this composed in the flowing, graceful envelope of a remarkably firm and highly legible arabesque, which knots and inverts the spiral in the same manner as the musical motif in the pieces by Debussy that have precisely the same title'. Casting about for a subject (or what he called at the time the 'literature'<sup>3</sup> of a composition), Vuil-



E. V., sketch for *The Lady with the Unicorn*, c. 1930, graphite on paper, 10.6 x 18 cm. Private collection.

lard is known to have returned to the Musée de Cluny that summer and to have been enraptured by the tapestries,<sup>4</sup> especially that of *The Lady with the Unicorn*<sup>5</sup> (see ill.). Yet the lighting here, unlike that of the stage-sets he would later paint – that of the *Album* series (1895, V-96.1 to V-96.5), in particular – shines through the smocks, fabrics, stripes and mottled wool. The gunmetal-blue sky, as it filters through the branches, lays a silvery light on the group of figures, vying for predominance with an orange-ochre reminiscent of the unpainted areas of his small compositions on cardboard. Here, it is the underpainting that plays the role previously performed by the support. In his Journal for 16 July, during his visit to Cluny, Vuillard has this telling phrase: 'In tapestries, I think that merely by enlarging my little panel, it would make a subject for a decorative work'.<sup>6</sup> Félix Fénéon himself qualified this painting as the 'palette' for *The Public Gardens*: 'All the variations that will follow are already here in force and the painting is a catalogue of the ornamental motifs provided by foliage, the fabric of a sock, the stripes of a bench, the festoons of a bank of flowers'.<sup>7</sup> It may be that the *Square* was discarded as part of the decorative cycle because it had no real potential for extension sideways; and Vuillard was soon convinced of the modernity of a decorative ensemble the topography of which follows on from one panel to the next. It would have been difficult to devise side-panels for the square de la Trinité; the much vaster Bois de Boulogne, on the other hand, was far more suitable. Whatever the explanation, the panel, even seen in isolation, is one of the most masterly works in Vuillard's entire oeuvre.

<sup>1</sup> Groom 1993, pp. 43–44.

<sup>2</sup> E. V., Journal, I, 2, fol. 45v.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., January 1894, I.2, fol. 66r.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., fol. 44r.

<sup>5</sup> *The Lady with the Unicorn, To My Sole Desire*, late fifteenth century, tapestry, 4.73 x 4.63 m, Musée National du Moyen Âge, Paris.

<sup>6</sup> E. V., Journal, January 1894, I.2, fol. 44r.

<sup>7</sup> Fénéon 1970, vol. I., p. 256.

## V-38

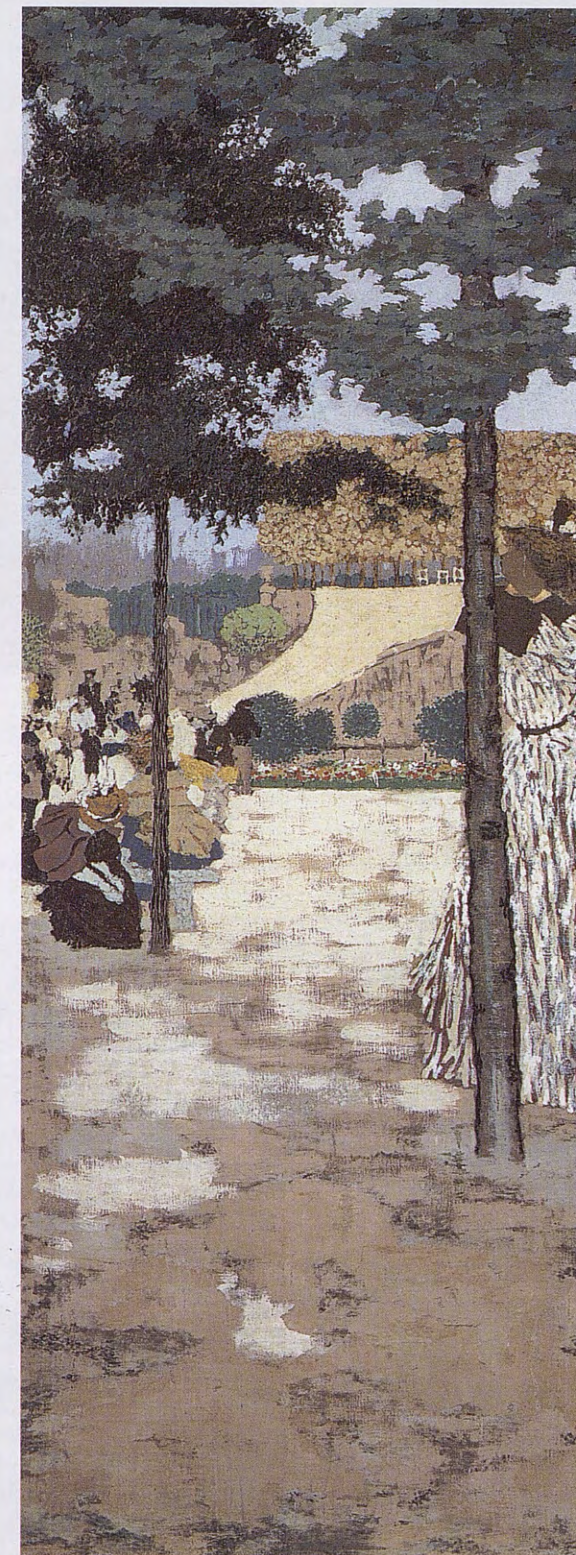
### In the Tuileries

(preliminary sketch for *The Public Gardens*)

1894

Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
210 x 80 cm

Art market, Lucerne (Switzerland)



V-38

**Provenance:** Milo Beretta, Montevideo – Antonio Santamarina, Buenos Aires – Jacques Helft, Paris – Paul Pétridès, Paris – Galerie Rosengart, Lucerne.

**Exhibitions:** Montevideo, Amigos del arte, 1935, no. 72 [*The Tuileries*] – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 21 (ill.) – Zurich, 1964, no. 138 – Zurich, 1993, no. 168 (col. ill.)

**Bibliography:** *Città di Milano*, no. 11, Nov. 1959, p. 650 (ill.) – Groom 1993, p. 52, fig. 84.

## V-39.1 to V-39.9

### The Public Gardens

1894

Glue-based distemper on canvas

**Common provenance:** Commissioned from Vuillard by Alexandre Natanson in January 1894.

**Common exhibition:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1906, no. 26.

**Common bibliography:** Mellerio 1896, p. 49 – Segard 1914, pp. 253, 289–291 – Bazin 1933, p. 91, fig. 101 – Leroy 1934, p. 315 – Escholier 1937, p. 21 – Dorival 1943, p. 127 – Salomon 1945, pp. 36 (ill.), 37–40 – Chastel 1946, pp. 29 (ill.), 53, 115 – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 53, 83, 121–123, 129 (ill.), 130 (ill.), 188; and 1948c, pp. 15–16, pl. 8–10 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 57–68, 74, 76, 79–82, 92–93, 102, 105, 112–117, 124–130 – Salomon 1953, pp. 25–26 – Schweicher 1955, pp. 21–22, pl. 8 – Nattier-Natanson 1959, pp. 27 (ill.), 31, 33, 37 – Salomon 1961, pp. 43 (col. ill.), 44 – Schweicher 1963, p. 18 (ill.) – Bacou 1964, p. 194 – Dugdale 1965, p. 97, figs. 2–6 – Russoli 1966, col. pl. iv – Barilli 1967c, pp. 130–132, 132 (col. ill.) – Hamilton 1967, pp. 64–65, pl. 32 – Roger-Marx 1968, pp. 30, 32, 34 – Salomon 1968, pp. 20–21, 60, 61 (col. ill.), 62 (ill.) – Preston 1971, pp. 38, 84, 85 (col. ill.), 86, 87 (col. ill.), 88, 89 (col. ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971–72, pp. 36–39 (ill.), 49–53, 225, col. fig. 3 – Dunstan 1973, pp. 45, 48 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 124, 143–147, fig. 94 – Dorival 1977, p. 67, fig. 59 – Dunstan 1978, p. 82 (col. ill.) – Mauner 1978, pp. 152–153, 245 – Frèches-Thory 1979, pp. 305–312 (ill.) – Gold and Fizdale 1980, pp. 39, 52–55 – Oakley 1981, pp. 11–12, 15, col. pl. 8, 9 – Georges 1982, pp. 99–103 – Wilson-Bureau 1986, pp. 44 no. 4, 45 no. 26 – Thomson 1988, pp. 40, 104, 115, col. pl. 32–33 – Makarius 1989, pp. 9, 37, 38–39 (col. ill.), 41 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, pp. 117, 118 (ill.), 119–121 (col. ill.), 122 – Groom 1990, p. 153, fig. 7 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, pp. 28 (ill.), 29 (ill.) – Exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990–91, Cogeval, p. 118, and Dumas, pp. 72–73 (col. ill.), 74 – Bernier 1991, p. 187, 188–189 (col. ill.), 190–191 – Forgione 1992, pp. 41, 103–105, 118, figs. 12–18 – Robinson 1992, pp. 111–123 – Boyle-Turner 1993, p. 94, 95 (col. ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, pp. 72 (col. ill.), 73, 74–77 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, pp. 1, 3, 47–65, 67, 69, 77, 89, 101, 124, 128, 150, 158, 160, 206, col. figs. 77–82, col. fig. 85, fig. 86 – Libby 1994, pp. 30–36, 42, 44, fig. 2, fig. 3 – Argencourt 1999, no. 219, pp. 626, 627 (col. ill.), 628–630, figs. 219a–219g – Groom, exhib. cat., Chicago-New York, 2001, pp. 120–124.

See plates next pages.



## V-39.1

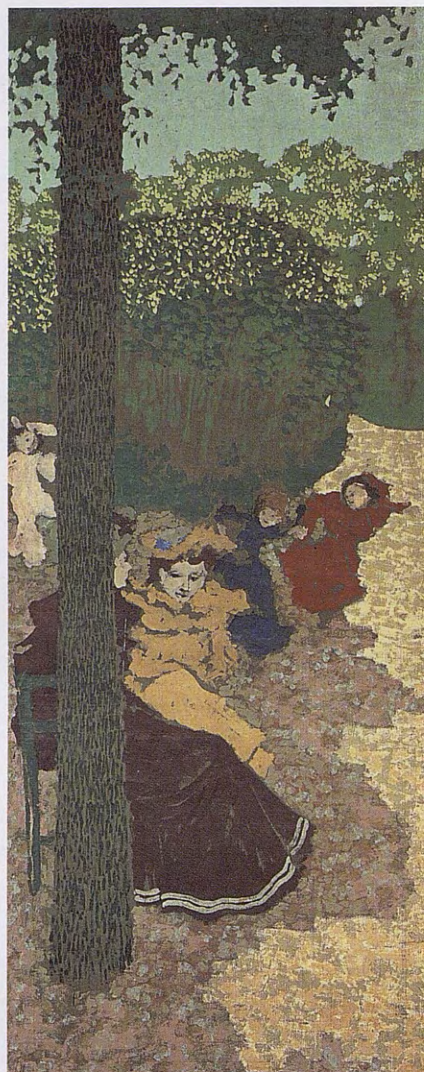
## Little Girls Playing

1894  
Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
214.5 × 88 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right:  
*E Vuillard 94*  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1978-46

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 120 (ill.) [*Fillettes jouant*] – M. Level, Paris, 30,000 F – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 19-20 Feb. 1934, lot 168A (ill.) – Mme Knessler, Paris, 11,250 F – Mme Edith-May Hirschler (Mme Alexandre Radot) – Mme Alexandre Radot bequest, 1978; Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 1986.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibition] – Paris, Grand Palais, 1980-81, no. 202-(1) (ill.) – Paris, 1993-94, no. 167d, p. 88, col. fig. 22.

**Bibliography:** [See common bibliography] – Compin and Roquebert 1986, p. 284 (ill.) – Rosenblum 1989, p. 610 (col. ill.) – Compin, Lacambre and Roquebert 1990, p. 481 (ill.) – Paris, Orsay, 1992, p. 143 (col. ill.) – Ellridge 1993, p. 168 (col. ill.) – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 86.



V-39.1



V-39.2

## V-39.2

## Asking Questions

1894  
Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
214.5 × 92 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right:  
*E Vuillard 94*  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1978-47

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 124 (ill.) [*L'Interrogatoire*] – M. Level, Paris, 30,000 F – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 19-20 Feb. 1934, lot 168B (ill.) – Mme Knessler, Paris, 11,250 F – Mme Edith-May Hirschler (Mme Alexandre Radot) – Mme Alexandre Radot bequest, 1978; Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 1986.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibition] – Paris, Grand Palais, 1980-81, no. 202-(2) (ill.) – Paris, 1993-94, no. 167e, p. 88, col. fig. 22.

## V-39.3

## Nursemaids

1894; reworked in 1936  
Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
213.5 × 73 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right:  
*E Vuillard 94*

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1977-365

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 118 (ill.) [*Les Nourrices*] – Purchased by the French State for 66,667 F; Musée du Louvre,

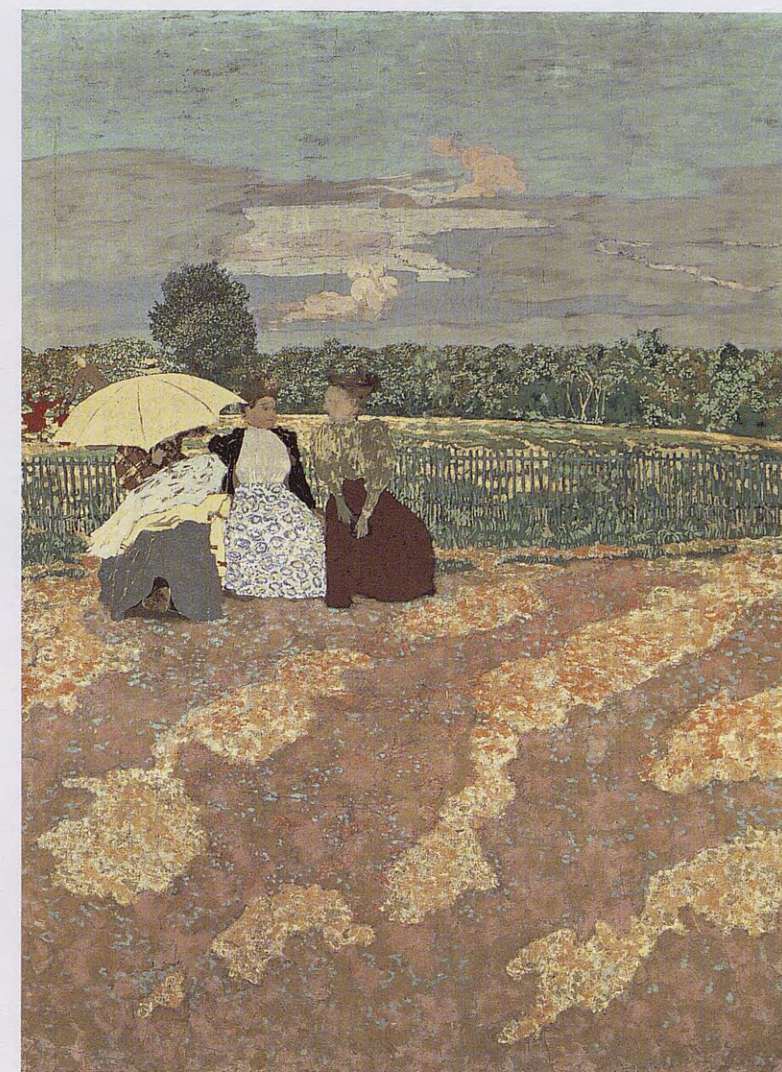
1929; deposited at the Musée du Luxembourg, Paris, 1930; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; transferred to Musée du Louvre (Palais de Tokyo), Paris, in 1977; transferred to Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 1986.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibition] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 32c – Liège-Ghent-Luxembourg, 1948, no. 20a (ill.) – Amsterdam-Brussels, 1952, no. 97 (ill.) – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 216 – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 53 (ill.) – Paris, 1993-94, no. 167b, p. 89, col. fig. 22.

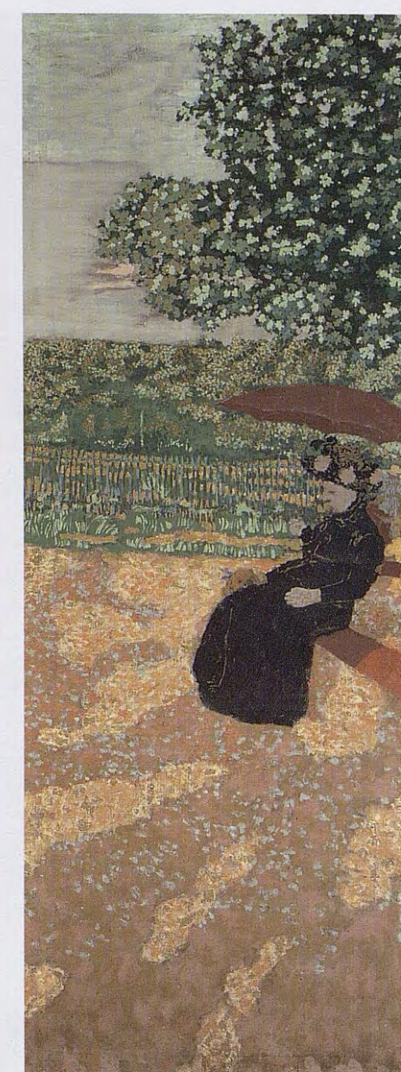
**Bibliography:** [see common bibliography] – Rey 1929b, pp. 123, 125 (ill.) – Hauteccœur and Ladoué 1931, p. 65; and 1933, p. 66 – Humbert, Chevojon and Chevojon 1948 (ill.) – Cassou, Dorival and Homolle 1954, p. 164 – Dorival 1961, pp. 24, 92 (col. ill.) – *Lecture pour tous*, no. 121, Jan. 1964, p. 79 (col. ill.) – Russoli 1966, col. pl. 4 – Dugdale 1967a, pp. 4-5, col. pl. 5 – Russoli and Martini 1973, col. pl. 4 – *CdA*, no. 283, Sept. 1975, p. 76 (col. ill.) – Compin and Roquebert 1986, p. 280 (ill.) – Rosenblum 1989, p. 610 (col. ill.) – Compin, Lacambre and Roquebert 1990, p. 475 (ill.) – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 86, col. fig. 22.



V-39.3



V-39.4



V-39.5

## V-39.4

## Conversation

1894; reworked in 1936  
Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
213 × 154 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right:  
*E. Vuillard 94*  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1977-365

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 125 (ill.) [*La Conversation*] (ill.) – Purchased by the French State for 66,667 F; Musée du Louvre, 1929; deposited at the Musée du Luxembourg, Paris, in 1930; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; transferred to Musée du Louvre (Palais de Tokyo), Paris, 1977; transferred to Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 1986.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibition] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 32a – Liège-Ghent-Luxembourg, 1948, no. 20b (ill.) – Amsterdam-Brussels, 1952, no. 97 (ill.) – Paris, Musée

National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 217 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1960-61, no. 739 – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 51 (ill.) – Paris, 1993-94, no. 167a, p. 89, col. fig. 22.

**Bibliography:** [See common bibliography] – Rey 1929b, pp. 123, 125 (ill.) – Hauteccœur and Ladoué 1931, p. 65; and 1933, p. 66 – Humbert, Chevojon and Chevojon 1948 (ill.) – Cassou, Dorival and Homolle 1954, p. 164 – Colombier 1955, p. 508 (ill.) – Hermann 1959, pl. 10 – *Jardin des arts*, no. 161, April 1968, p. 80 (ill.) – *Plaisir de France*, no. 355, May 1968, p. 13 (col. ill.) – *CdA*, no. 283, Sept. 1975, p. 76 (col. ill.) – Compin and Roquebert 1986, p. 280 (ill.) – Rosenblum 1989, p. 610 (col. ill.) – Compin, Lacambre and Roquebert 1990, p. 475 (ill.) – Ellridge 1993, pp. 168-169 (col. ill.) – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 86, col. fig. 22.

## V-39.5

## Red Parasol

1894; reworked in 1936  
Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
214 × 81 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right: [*illegible*]  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1977-365

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 117 [*L'Ombrelle rouge*] (ill.) – Purchased by the French State for 66,667 F; Musée du Louvre, 1929; deposited at the Musée du Luxembourg, Paris, in 1930; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; transferred to Musée du Louvre (Palais de Tokyo), Paris, 1977; transferred to Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 1986.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibition] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 32b – Liège-Ghent-Luxembourg, 1948, no. 20c (ill.) – Amsterdam-Brussels, 1952, no. 97 (ill.) – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 218 – Paris,



Orangerie, 1968, no. 52 (ill.) – Paris, 1993-94, no. 167c, p. 89, col. fig. 22.

**Bibliography:** [See common bibliography] – Rey 1929b, pp. 123, 125 (ill.) – Hauteceur and Ladoué 1931, p. 65; and 1933, p. 66 – Humbert, Chevojon and Chevojon 1948 (ill.) – Cassou, Dorival and Homolle 1954, p. 164 – Dorival 1961, pp. 24, 93 (col. ill.) – *CdA*, no. 283, Sept. 1975, p. 76 (col. ill.) – Compin and Roquebert 1986, p. 280 (ill.) – Rosenblum 1989, p. 610 (col. ill.) – Compin, Lacambre and Roquebert 1990, p. 475 (ill.) – Ellridge 1993, p. 169 (col. ill.) – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 86, col. fig. 22.

### V-39.6

#### Promenade

1894

Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
214.3 × 97.9 cm

Signed and dated, lower right:

*E Vuillard 94*

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston  
(Texas), The Robert Lee Blaffer  
Memorial Collection, 53.9

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 121 [*La Promenade*] (ill.) – Georges Bénard, Paris, 52,000 F – Bénard sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 9 June 1933, lot 89 (ill.) – Henri Blum, Paris, 32,000 F – Hector Brame, Paris – De Hauke, New York – Knoedler, New York – Kenneth Dale Owen, Houston – Donation from Mrs. Kenneth Dale Owen to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1953.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibition] – Paris, Galerie Beaux-Arts, 1934, no. 164 – Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 78 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 34a – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 35 (col. ill.), 101 – Detroit, Institute of Arts, 1954, no. 134.

**Bibliography:** [see common bibliography] – *The Connoisseur* 134, no. 539, August 1954, p. 69 (col. ill.) – Kelder 1986, p. 209, fig. 215.

### V-39.7

#### First Steps

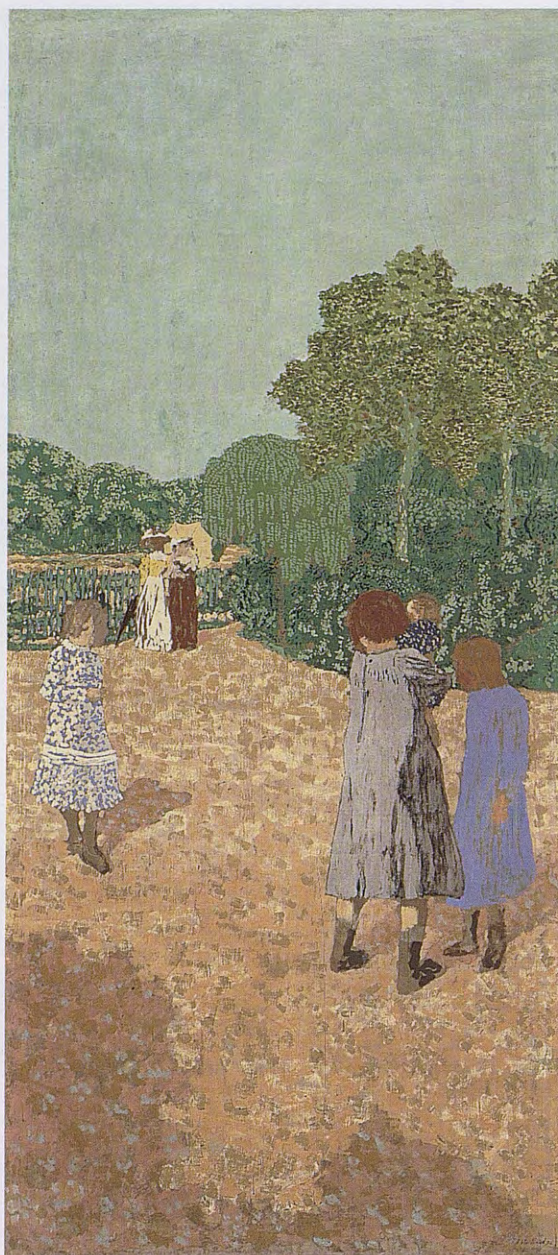
1894

Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
213.4 × 68.5 cm

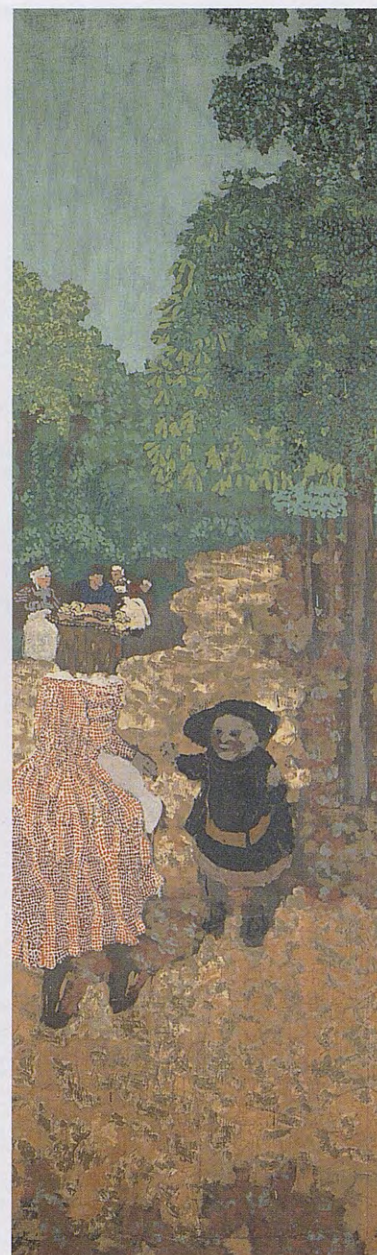
Signed and dated, lower right:

*E Vuillard 94*

Private collection, United States



V-39.6



V-39.7

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 119 [*Les Premiers Pas*] (ill.) – M. Kleinmann, Paris, 30,100 F – Gaston Gemmendinger, Paris – Seized by the Nazis during the German occupation – Returned – Private collection – Tom James Co./Oxford Clothes, United States – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibition] – Chicago-New York, 2001, no. 32, p. 121 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** [see common bibliography] – *Répertoire des biens spoliés en France* 1947, p. 133, no. 3093.

### V-39.8

#### The Two Schoolboys

1894

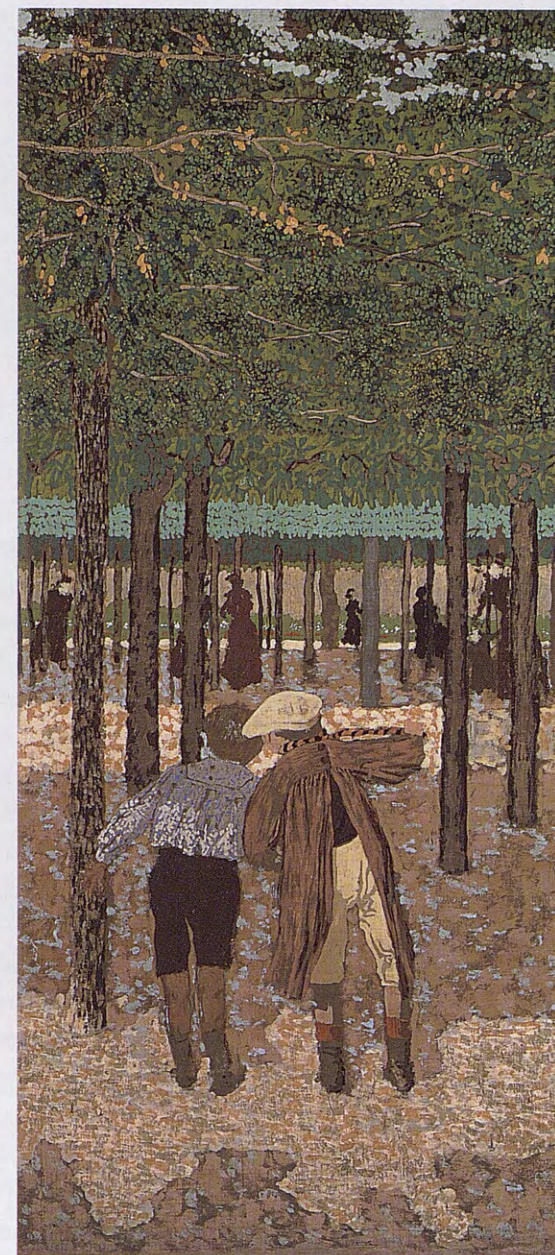
Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
214 × 98 cm

Signed and dated, lower right:

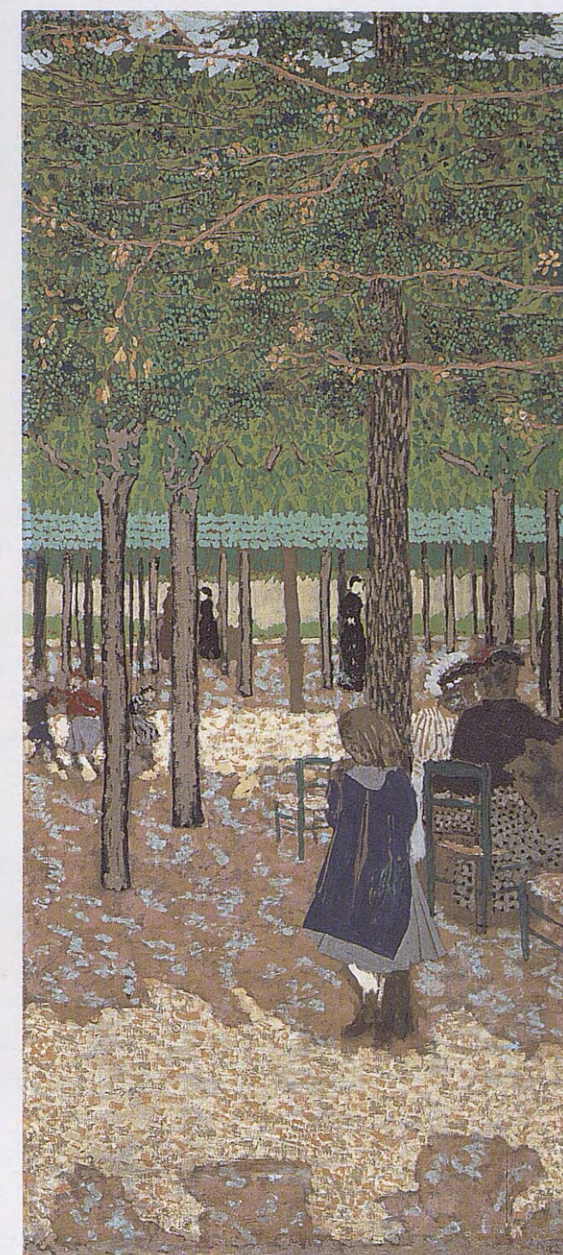
*E Vuillard 94*

Musée d'Art Moderne, Musées Royaux  
des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels,  
Inv. 6681

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 123 [*Les Deux Écoliers*] (ill.) – Princesse Caetani de Bassiano, Paris, 49,500 F – Mme Georges Pillement, Paris – Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, 1953.



V-39.8



V-39.9

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibition] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 33 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 219 (ill.) – Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, 1956, n.p. – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 22 (ill.) – Bruges, Stedelijk Museum, 1961, no. 60 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 87 (ill.) – Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire 1966, no. 65 – Ostende, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, 1967, n.p. – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 72 (col. ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 54 (col. ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1972, no. 759 – Brussels, Musée d'Art Moderne, 1973, no. 150 (ill.) – Brussels, Musées Royaux, 1975, no. 28 (ill.) – Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Le Prieuré, 1985-86, no. 120 – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 167f (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** [See common bibliography] – *Le Figaro, supplément artistique hebdomadaire*, no. 231, 2 May 1929, p. 496 (ill.) – Brussels 1971, p. 73, no. 76, col. fig. 3 – Brussels 1975, pp. 260-261, no. 618 (ill.) – Cogeval 1986, p. 97 (col. ill.).

### V-39.9

#### Under the Trees

1894

Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
214.6 × 97.7 cm

Signed and dated, lower right:

*E Vuillard 94*

The Cleveland Museum of Art,  
Cleveland (Ohio), 1953.212

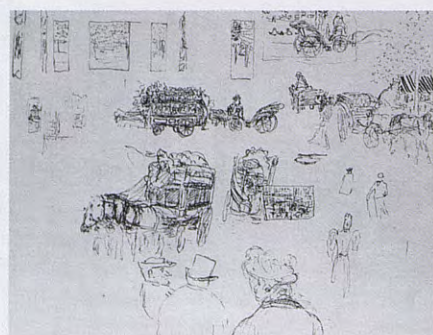
**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 122 [*Sous les arbres*] (ill.) – Georges Bénard, Paris, 52,500 F – Bénard sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 9 June 1933, lot 90 (ill.) – Henri Blum, Paris, 32,000 F – Hector Brame, Paris – De Hauke, New York – Knoedler, New York – Gift from Hanna Fund to the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1953.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibition] – Paris, Galerie Beaux-Arts, 1934, no. 165 – Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 79 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 34b – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 34 (col. ill.), 101 – Cleveland, Museum of Art, 1960, no. 10 (col. ill.) – Chicago-New York, 2001, no. 33, p. 121 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** [See common bibliography] – *Emporium*, no. 8, August 1938, p. 109 (ill.) – *Arts*, Nov. 1951, p. 41 (col. ill.) – Francis 1954, pp. 2 (ill.), 6 – *Art Digest*, 1 Feb. 1954, p. 8 (ill.) – *Bulletin of The Cleveland Museum of Art* 41, no. 6, June 1954, p. 129 (col. ill.) and cat. cover (col. ill.) – Milliken 1958, p. 57 (col. ill.) – Cleveland 1958a, fig. 518; and 1958b, no. 81 (col. ill.) – Cleveland 1966, p. 182 – Lowry 1961, pp. 232 (col. ill.), 247 – *Book of the Month Club News*, May 1966, cover (col. ill.) – Cleveland 1969 – Rishel, travelling exhib. cat., United States, 1989-91, p. 112, fig. 165.



In his 'autobiographical notes', Vuillard dates his work on *The Public Gardens* to August and September 1894. Thadée Natanson's brother, Alexandre, wished to decorate the gallery-salon of his home in the avenue du Bois (today the avenue Foch). As a matter of fact, the painter mentions the commission as early as January: 'Offer for a Decoration, to do anything I like. Why not try, why not will his vague desires, trust in his dreams, which will be realities for others as soon as I have given them a prior existence.'<sup>1</sup> Vuillard, then, seems to have hesitated for quite some time over the choice of subject: a study-sheet previously published in the exhibition catalogue for *Le Temps des Nabis* (Florence 1998, no. 77, and Montreal 1998, no. 179) presents cabs and omnibuses and various scenes of city life, as well as, at top left, rough sketches of seven of the panels that subsequently became *The Public Gardens*, suspended in space in view of a possible hanging. Clearly recognisable are the chestnut trees in the Tuileries. A second, larger study-sheet, hitherto unpublished and datable to mid-summer 1894 (see ill.), presents a group of narrow panels of various widths, peopled with female figures who call to mind Bonnard's *Women in a Garden*<sup>2</sup> (1891) or the figures in the *Natanson Panels* (see ill.), painted the following year. All of which goes to show how little the subjects tackled by Vuillard were determined by format; instead, he



E. V., Study Sheet with a Hackney-Carriage, 1894, pen and brown ink on paper, 24.3 x 31.8 cm. Private collection.

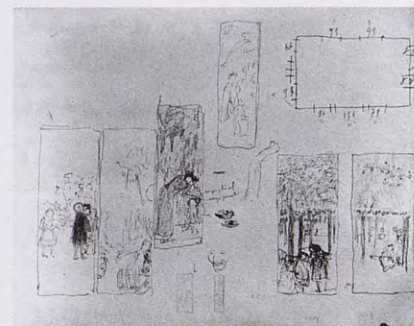
was able to adapt his work to the technical constraints confronting him. Another drawing (see ill. p. 434), highlighted with pastel and reproduced in the catalogue entries for the *Natanson Panels* (see V-96.1 to V-96.5), shows five paintings that have precisely the

same formats as those of *The Album*, *The Stoneware Vase*, etc., though the floral interiors in which the women in the final versions are arrayed are here replaced by garden scenes. This crucial document shows how Vuillard could to turn a situation around completely, grafting one idea onto another

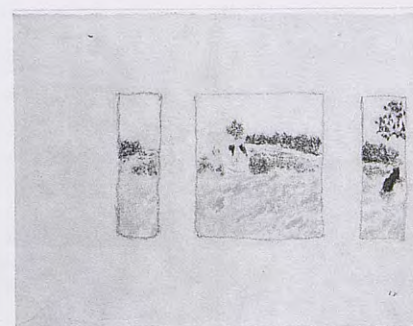


E. V., sketch for *The Public Gardens*, pen and brown ink on paper, 25 x 32 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

and assigning the scenes described in his paintings to different formats. The dimensions of the nine panels, on the other hand, seem to have been fixed in his mind by early summer, and would not vary thereafter. *The Public Gardens* are basically an extended variation on the theme of Paris parks. We know (see *Square de la Trinité*, V-37) that Vuillard originally had the square de la Trinité in mind, but then chose the Tuileries and the Bois de Boulogne instead. The Nabi painter had known the Tuileries all his life. The rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré, where he lived with his mother and family, lay only a short walk from the large park, which he would cross every day on his way to the École des Beaux-Arts or the Louvre. As Gloria Groom has shrewdly suggested, the consolable young bachelor may have gone there in search of models, or quite simply to meet girls.<sup>3</sup> In



E. V., preparatory drawing indicating dimensions for *The Public Gardens*, 1896, graphite, pen and Indian ink, and pastel on paper, 25.2 x 32 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



E. V., Sketch for the central triptych, pastel on paper, 25 x 32 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

his Journal entry for 13 July, we come across this astonishing note:<sup>4</sup> 'On the way out, sentimental outpourings for the first time to Bonnard. Sad.' And, as was mentioned earlier, when a nursemaid came to sit on his bench in the square de la Trinité on 24 July, he confessed to being 'a little troubled'.<sup>5</sup> Vuillard soon abandoned the square de la Trinité for more panoramic public gardens in which he could build up a narrative laterally, breaking it down into pairs or a triptych. This is precisely what he does in *The Two Schoolboys* and *Under the Trees*, which depict the chestnut-trees in the Tuileries; on the other hand, the triptych now at the Musée d'Orsay (*Conversation, Nursemaids, Red Parasol*) may depict the broader vistas of the Bois de Boulogne, or the Terrasse de Saint-Cloud, with its almost limitless perspectives.

The tradition of an extended decorative narrative is essentially of Italian origin, and goes from Mantegna's *Wedding Chamber* (1474) in the ducal palace of Mantua to Tiepolo's *Meeting of Anthony and Cleopatra* (1747-1750) at the Palazzo Labia in Venice. In France, the tradition of the 'painted gallery' was firmly established by the seventeenth century. Le Sueur's *Life of Saint Bruno* (1645-1648),<sup>6</sup> painted for the cloisters of the Carthusians, comprised twenty-two paintings to which Vuillard would regularly pay homage throughout his life, from an early entry in his Journal to the late *Self-Portrait in the Dressing-Room Mirror* (XI-167) in which he quotes *Raymond Diocrès Replies after his Death*.

Vuillard's garden scenes might also be read as a reinterpretation of those groves so propitious to love which abound in Fragonard's

work; indeed, the father of the three Natanson brothers, Adam, had a decorative composition by Fragonard in his château at Méréville. Particularly significant in this respect are *The Loves of the Shepherds*,<sup>7</sup> commissioned in 1771 by Madame du Barry for her château de Louveciennes but never installed. Fragonard's celebrated decorative ensemble is composed of four *scènes galantes* – *The Rendez-vous*, *The Pursuit*, *The Declaration of Love* and *The Lover Crowned* – separated by vertical bands adorned with hollyhocks, similar to the bands of foliage employed by Vuillard. All four panels are today in the Frick Collection in New York. Above all, perhaps, Vuillard's garden scenes should be seen as free interpretations of Flemish painting, which he had been studying all his life in the Louvre, and at which he would take a particularly close look during his trip to Brussels and Holland in 1892. One of the acquisitions made by the Louvre at this period was the Dutch painter Gérard David's large *Madonna* triptych, also known as the *Sedano Triptych*,<sup>8</sup> which entered the Flemish collection of the Louvre in 1890. The dimensions of the composition, in which the Virgin is shown surrounded by saints and donors, are similar to those of Vuillard's triptych of nursemaids at the Musée d'Orsay. The central position occupied by the Virgin and Child is likewise comparable to that of Vuillard's nursemaid holding an infant swaddled in white gauze in her lap. Here, too, the ten-centimetre gap required for the articulations between each panel introduces a slight rupture into the otherwise continuous narrative, exactly like the gaps required between each panel of *The Public Gardens*, which should never be presented flush with one another. Another possible source for Vuillard's magnificent ensemble is the *Triptych of the Family of Saint Anne before a Hedge of Roses* (see ill.), which he must have seen in the Ghent museum in 1892. Once again, the triptych depicts a *sacra conversazione*, with the Virgin bearing the infant Christ at the centre. The figures are bounded by a hedge that separates them from the background. As in *The Public Gardens*, they are worked into the very pigment of the composition and endowed with a swaying, wave-like grace.



Master of the Family of St. Anne, *Triptych of the Family of St. Anne before a Hedge of Roses*, fifteenth century, panel. Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent.

The Natanson commission – a real godsend for a twenty-six-year-old painter – gave Vuillard an opportunity to present the scenes of *petit-bourgeois* life of which he had long been an observer within a large decorative ensemble. He, too, had once been the pampered child, questioned, scolded and admired by a court of women. Like the keen-eyed schoolboys, he surveys the comings and goings of anonymous passers-by strolling through the parks of Paris. He invents a story for them. In painting this decorative cycle, he gave definitive form to his tenderhearted vision of the world, and it was on tiptoe – with disconcerting subtlety – that he entered the ranks of the very great artists. As he wrote in his Journal for January 1894: 'Every emotion has a right to its [own] sign. All signs are of incomparable value in the life of one and the other'.<sup>9</sup>

Many preparatory sketches exist for these *Public Gardens*, both in Vuillard's Journal and on separate study-sheets (see ill.). Pastel drawings now at the Musée d'Orsay<sup>10</sup> (see ill.) give some rough indication of colouring, but, more importantly, specify the desired distance between the panels, which function like enchanted windows opening up whole new artificial vistas in the walls of the Natanson salon in the avenue Foch.



E. V., study for *The Public Gardens*, 1893-94, graphite, pen, black ink and chalk, 23 x 34 cm. Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven (Connecticut).

*The Public Gardens*, then, is a masterpiece of solids and hollows. There are moments in this nine-canvas cycle that are quite simply stunning. The figures in the Brussels picture, *The Two Schoolboys*, bear an amusing resemblance to the eponymous heroes of the Belgian comic-strip, *Quik and Flupke*, who would make their appearance only very much later, in the course of the twentieth century. These little rascals – or so we assume them to be – observe a ghost-like flurry of figures in the shade of the Tuileries, while the leaves on the trees give rise to one of Vuillard's most voluptuous demonstrations of 'all-over' painting, of 'dripping' even; one need only consider the mauve shirt of one of the boys, overlaid with delicate washes of violet and scratches of enamelled blue. Another compound colour is the inimitable, soft blue-green used for the lower line of chestnut leaves that bisects the diptych horizontally.

The order in which the nine panels were arranged in the Natanson salon has caused a lot of ink to be spilled. Mallarmé said to the painter: 'What a fine evocation you have procured me'.<sup>11</sup> Much later, Annette Vaillant would recall the afternoons spent at her uncle's home under the benevolent auspices of the *Public Gardens*: 'Mademoiselle Anne would often come to play music with Evelyn and Bolette and would spend Sunday afternoons with them. I can see her now, half reclining on a small sofa, at the far end of an interminable gallery decorated with nine large panels by Vuillard ... Between these *Gardens of Paris*, where I was always happy to see again, beneath a frieze of chestnut-trees, the two schoolboys playing hide-and-seek, the nursemaids and the old lady with a red parasol on a bench in the sandy, sunlit alley, my uncle would hold a fortnightly ball'.<sup>12</sup> When Alexandre Natanson moved to the Champs-Élysées in 1908, Vuillard noted, not without a certain satisfaction: 'Look back at old notes from 94 on Alexandre's panels. Find similar dispositions in the mechanisms of thought. Good condition'.<sup>13</sup> There is little to add to the remarkable studies carried out by Claire Frèches and Gloria Groom, who have determined the precise position of each panel in the salon of the avenue Foch and have also commented upon their reinstallation in the



avenue des Champs-Élysées in 1908. Our own approach will be of a more iconographic nature.

In 1894, Vuillard renounced fatherhood once and for all, though he intended to exert it by proxy, as it were, through the person of his sister, Marie. When he completed the panels in September, his sister was expecting a child, who, sadly, was never to see the light of day (see *La Berceuse. Marie Roussel in Bed*, IV-161). After her painful separation from Kerr-Xavier Roussel, who for a year lived with Paul Ranson's sister-in-law, Germaine (see *Family Evening*, IV-211, and *Large Interior with Six Figures* IV-215), she gave birth to Petit-Jean in the summer of 1896. He, too, died, while still in his infancy. Might an artist as gifted and sensitive as Vuillard have had a premonition of the suffering that was to be visited upon his sister and family – rather as Gustav Mahler composed his *Kindertotenlieder* only a few years before the death of his daughter in 1905 – and have wanted to make it an object of Symbolist meditation? Such is our conviction. Having designed stage-sets for plays by Maeterlinck and Ibsen, Vuillard will have been keenly aware of the inevitability of death. His experience of the theatre inclined him at the time towards the more obscure fevers of Symbolism, and he was adept at taking even the most minor upheaval in his family life and inserting it in this pessimistic framework. We need only look at the woman in *Red Parasol*, dressed in mourning black and locked in solitude on this fine summer's day. At first glance, she seems a silent and highly effective counterweight to the bustle of *Conversation*, to the left; if we view her in isolation, however, we are gripped with emotion. The blue sky is almost entirely veiled in black; everywhere violet greys insinuate themselves, imparting a faint air of sadness to the composition. The mood of the three canvases taken together is one of extreme melancholy, with soft green effects standing out in an unreal manner against the background of the sky. In *Promenade*, the sycamore branches resemble jets of water whose drops have been suspended miraculously in mid-air, as it were. Elsewhere, the painter sets down a 'beautiful patch of yellow earth with a grey shadow lying across

it'.<sup>14</sup> The shrubbery is presented in clumps not unlike those found in medieval illuminated manuscripts. All the elements laid out on the surface of these nine panels – the nursemaids in their polka-dot dresses, the boaters with their concentric stripes, the parasols – we have seen before in Vuillard's work; thus far, however, each had seemed to be going through its role, alone in a corner. Here, we are present at the dress-rehearsal: the red-check smock in *First Steps*, the striped fabrics, the garnet-coloured splash of a skirt, the shot-silk effect of the ground, the oppressive, summer heat – all combine to bring to life an enchanted garden which we thought we knew, but whose meaning we have still to grasp. When we first consider these compositions, we interpret them as picturesque sketches of people going about their private lives in a large park (*'intimités en plein air'*).<sup>15</sup> When we take a closer look, however, we can't help wondering what these ghostly figures are doing beneath the trees: look at the child dressed as a little pink rabbit behind the *Little Girls at Play* – a carnival costume in the middle of July! – or the shades hurrying on their way in *The Two Schoolboys*. Equally ghost-like are the figures that loom up behind the gate; the clown-like characters partly concealed by a white parasol in *Conversation*, for example, or the strange black Pierrot behind *The Nursemaids*, who seems to be preaching to the children. There is a distant echo of the enchanted isle of Alcina, on which the sorceress held captive the knights she had transformed into animals. The women and children who populate these paintings are graced with a sort of *himmliche Leben*.

By way of conclusion, let us note the quasi-religious significance of the central triptych at the Musée d'Orsay. The woman whose face is shielded from us by a large white parasol – because of the heat? out of modesty? sorrow? – and who holds a baby in her lap, swaddled in a white gauze to protect it from the heat, is strangely reminiscent of Munch's terrifying late work, *Heredity* (see ill.), a clear allusion to the ravages of syphilis. In the work of the Norwegian artist, who did not balk at depicting the most violent scenes, the mother weeps over the body of her dead



Edvard Munch, *Heredity*, 1897, oil on canvas. Munch Museet, Oslo.



Detail of V-39.4.

child, which has returned to its embryonic state. There is no expressionistic violence in Vuillard's work, of course, but it is permissible to ask whether the white veil might not equally be a shroud, with the parasol, like the wing of death, casting its shadow over the infant. A silent, understated, static drama – Vuillard at the time was painting stage-sets for plays by Ibsen and Strindberg – unfolds in the midst of squealing children, shifting air and abundant, overflowing vegetation. The painter of life's little ecstasies could be said to have anticipated the misfortunes of his family in a large decorative cycle in which the idea of eternal paradise and the perpetual regeneration of nature and human life wins out. This should come as no surprise from a virtuoso manipulator like Vuillard, a dramatist in whom the sense of ellipsis is always paramount.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., *Journal*, January 1894, I, 2, fol. 66r–67r; Françoise Alexandre reads 'Darien', the name of an anarchist writer of the period, in the place of 'décor'. Like Gloria Groom, we stand by our initial reading.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bonnard, *Women in a Garden*, 1891, four panels, oil on paper, mounted on canvas, each panel 160 × 48 cm, private collection.

<sup>3</sup> Groom 1993, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> E. V., *Journal*, I, 2, fol. 43r.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., fol. 45v. quoted extensively in V-37.

<sup>6</sup> Eustache Le Sueur, *Life of St Bruno*, 1645–1648, series of twenty-two oils on canvas, 193 × 130 cm for twenty of them, 162 × 114 cm and 191 × 285 cm for the remaining two, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

<sup>7</sup> Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Loves of the Shepherds* or *The Ages of Life*, four decorative works, oil on canvas, Frick Collection, New York: *The Rendez-vous*, 318 × 244 cm; *The Pursuit*, 318 × 215 cm; *The Declaration of Love*, 318 × 215 cm; *The Lover Crowned*, 318 × 243 cm.

<sup>8</sup> Gérard David, *Triptych of the Sedano Family*, c. 1490, 97 × 71.5 cm (central panel); 91 × 30.1 cm (left panel); 91 × 30.4 cm (right panel), Musée du Louvre, Paris.

<sup>9</sup> E. V., *Journal*, I, 2, fol. 66r (January 1894).

<sup>10</sup> E. V., *Studies for The Public Gardens with a Plan of the Room*, 1894, pen and black ink, black pencil with pastel highlights on paper, 25 × 31.8 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris; two *Studies for four panels of the Public Gardens*, 25 × 32 cm, 28.4 × 32 cm, charcoal and pastel and pastel on paper, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted by Groom 1993, p. 64 (no. 133).

<sup>12</sup> Vaillant 1974, pp. 127–128.

<sup>13</sup> E. V., *Journal*, 20 May 1908, II, 1, fol. 43r.

<sup>14</sup> Segard 1914, p. 290.

<sup>15</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 122.

## V-39.10

### The Public Gardens.

#### Overdoor – I

1894

Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
40 × 149 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Alexandre Natanson, Paris – Returned to Vuillard's studio in 1908; Jacques Roussel, Paris – Private collection, France.

**Bibliography:** Groom 1993, p. 64, col. fig. 110a–b.



V-39.10



V-39.11

## V-39.11

### The Public Gardens.

#### Overdoor – II

1894

Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
40 × 149 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Alexandre Natanson, Paris – Returned to Vuillard's studio in 1908; Jacques Roussel, Paris – Private collection, France.



## V-40.1 to V-40.4

## The Public Gardens

## Overdoors

Four overdoors for the ensemble's reinstallation at 104 avenue des Champs-Élysées in 1908

**Common provenance:** Commissioned from Vuillard by Alexandre Natanson in 1908 – Jos Hessel, Paris, 1913 – The Hessel family governess – Cailleux, Paris – Sale, Palais des Congrès, Versailles, 24-25 Nov. 1968, lot 260 – The four *Overdoors* have since been cut into smaller canvases, some of which have appeared in the following auctions: Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 4 Nov. 1980, lots 195 and 196 – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 22 March 1988, lot 95 – Sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris, 26 Nov. 1988, lot 40 (col. ill.) – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 27 Nov. 1992, lot 85 (col. ill.) – Sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris, 26 Nov. 1993, lot 13 (col. ill.) – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 23 March 1994, lots 49 and 50 (col. ill.) – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 27 April 1994, lot 35 – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 14 June 1994, lot 44 (col. ill.).

**Common bibliography:** Vaillant 1974, pp. 127-128 – Groom 1993, p. 64, col. fig. 108a-b – Bergot *et al.* 1994, p. 251 (ill.) [for the Rouen panels].



V-40.1



V-40.2 (first state)



V-40.3



V-40.4

## V-40.1

## Foliage – I

1908

Tempera on canvas, 33.66 × 245.11 cm  
Private collection

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Richard L. Feigen Gallery, New York, 1994 – Private collection.

## V-40.2

## Foliage – II

1908

Tempera on canvas, separated in two parts, 33.7 × 85.7 cm and 34 × 86.2 cm  
Musée des Beaux-Arts et de la Céramique de Rouen (France), Gift by H. and S. Baderou, Inv. 975.4.5542 and 975.4.5543

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Musée des Beaux-Arts et de la Céramique, Rouen.

## V-40.3

## Foliage – III

1908

Tempera on canvas, 33.2 × 170.5 cm  
Private collection

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Richard L. Feigen Gallery, New York, 1994 – Private collection.

## V-40.4

## Foliage – IV

1908

Tempera on canvas, 38.6 × 161.1 cm  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Richard L. Feigen Gallery, New York, 1994 – Private collection – Luc Bellier, Paris.

## V-41

## The Divan

1895

Oil on cardboard or panel, 26 × 35.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York – Mrs. George T. Bowdoin, New York – Hirschl & Adler, New York – Frederic Papert, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 11 May 1977, lot 53 (ill.) – T. Shimizu, Tokyo – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 15 May 1985, lot 319 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 22 June 1987, lot 419 (col. ill.) – Maurice Keitelman, Brussels – Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 13 May 1997, lot 24 (col. ill.), bought in.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 8 (ill.) [After the Ball, 1893] – London, Gibson, 1988, p. 30 (col. ill.).

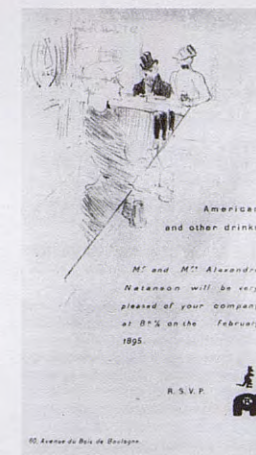
**Description:** In the light of an unseen lamp that lends a rosy glow to the picture, a woman wearing a long, brown-and-red skirt and a green blouse, her hair stiffened into a tall chignon, is seated on the edge



V-41

of a beige-coloured couch, bending over a dark form of which we see only the played trouser legs. To the right of her are several dark-brown figures observing the scene with curiosity. The tone of the couch blends into that of the wall in the background. Red carpet. (JS)

The unusual positioning of the figures in this small picture – a woman bent over a man stretched out on a bed, with other figures watching in the background – suggests it might be a depiction of the famous party at which Alexandre Natanson unveiled Vuillard's decorative panels, *The Public Gardens* (V-39), in his apartment at 60, avenue du Bois in February 1895. Countless writers (Huisman and Dortu, Fizdale, Thadée Natanson) have described this epic soirée at which Toulouse-Lautrec performed the role of barman. Friends and contributors to *La Revue Blanche* turned up in the course of the evening, amongst them Félix Fénéon, Alfred Jarry, Claude Terrasse, Jules Renard, Rachilde, Catulle-Mendès, Lucien Guitry, Pierre Louÿs, Henri de Régnier, Léon Blum, Stéphane Mallarmé and Tristan Bernard. Toulouse-Lautrec had arranged everything, even designing the lithographed invitation card announcing



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, invitation card to Alexandre Natanson's party, 1895, lithograph. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.

'American and other drinks' (see ill.). For the occasion, he had shaved his beard and head and donned the white livery of a barman, along with a waistcoat cut from an American flag on the back of which was written 'Don't speak to the man at the wheel'. He boasted of serving more than two thousand drinks in the course of the evening, the effect of which was to render the guests senseless, much to the delight of the makeshift barman. Thadée Natanson has left us a very vivid account of the party: 'Along with a few others, Vuillard and Bonnard had turned up very late from a trip to the outskirts of Paris. Their

fatigue had made them rather peckish and, finding a good deal less to eat than to drink, they were soon reeling from the series of glasses that Lautrec took delight in foisting on them. The moment soon came when they could no longer stay on their feet and had to be helped to the room where the organiser had had the foresight to have couches and beds made up, amongst which circulated, acting as a nurse along with the chambermaids, the extremely attractive English governess of the children of the house... The dim light made it impossible to tell whom they had put to bed, but their number was growing... I will never forget Félix Fénéon's gesture of stumbling, smiling courtesy as he stood up, not without difficulty, to yield his place to Bonnard and Vuillard who hadn't even recognised him, for Vuillard was barely conscious, his face and the hair surrounding it the same red, and Bonnard, laid out, was already as stiff as a dead drunk. Both were snoring before Fénéon could make it out of the room, leaning out of caution, if not gallantry, on the arm of the charming nurse'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Natanson 1948, pp. 256-257.





V-42

## V.42

## Fashionable Lady, Square des Batignolles

1898

Glue-based distemper on cardboard,  
34 × 38 cmSigned and inscribed, lower right: *à mon  
ami Thadée / Natanson / E Vuillard*

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Étienne Vautheret, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 24126) – Walter S. Brewster, Chicago (Illinois), 19 March 1926, 10,000 F – Wildenstein, New York – Private collection, New York, 1959.

**Bibliography:** Théodore 1938, p. 123 (ill.).

## V-43

## Woman by a Tree

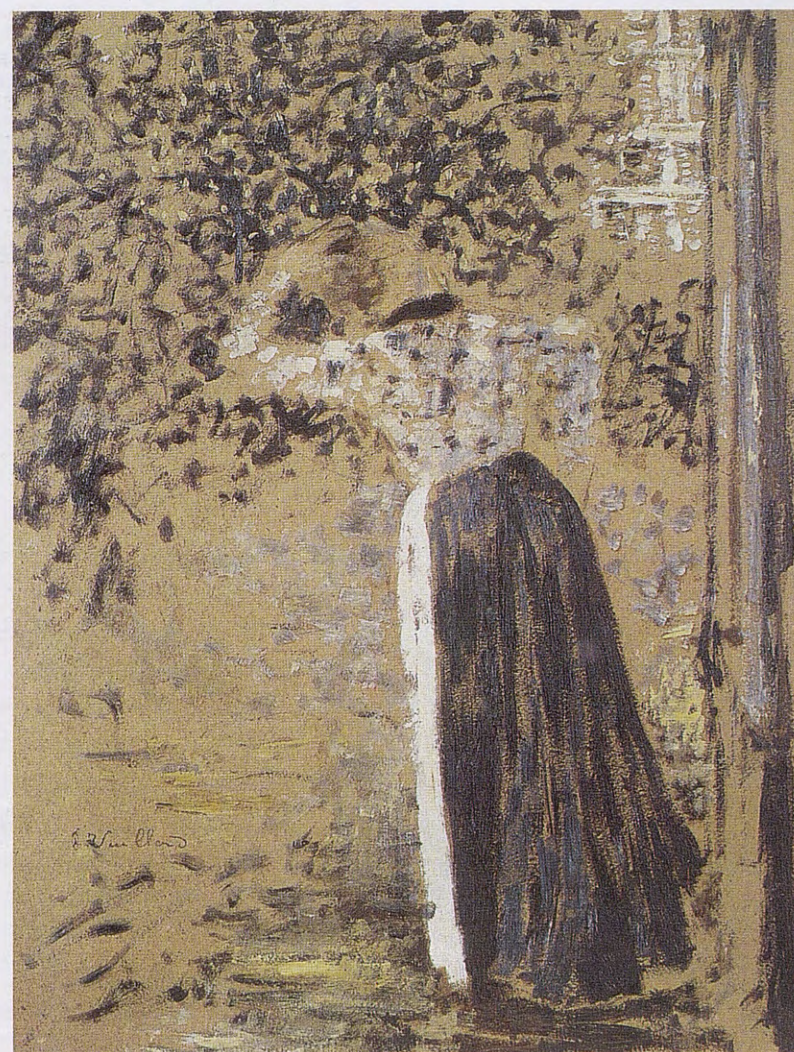
c. 1894-96

Oil on cardboard, 51 × 38 cm

Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Fernand Hayem, Paris, 1896, 100 F – Private collection, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot,



V-43

Paris, 24 March 1999, lot 72 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Soissons, [Colmet d'Aâge exhib.], 1896, no. 9 – Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 58.

**Description:** *The standing woman is seen from behind, wearing a black skirt and a white apron of which the edge is just visible. Small black leaves blend with her blouse and her ash-blond hair, that she is patting with her left hand. To the right is a white façade with windows. A harmony in grey, black and white, with cardboard support clearly visible throughout. (On the back of the painting is the inscription, in Vuillard's hand, 'Vuillard 342 rue Saint Honoré' and a shipping label marked 'Soissons, no. 9'.) (JS)*

## V-44

## The Balustrade in the Square de la Trinité

1894

Oil on cardboard, 30 × 30 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 27 Sept. 1958, lot 232 (ill.) – Private collection, Berne.

**Exhibition:** Winterthur, Villa Flora, 2001-02, no. 62, p. 48 (col. ill.).

## V-45

## Orange-Trees in the Tuileries

1894

Oil on cardboard, 27.5 × 24 cm

Stamp 2, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris, 1942 – J. Leleu, Paris – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London, c. 1954 – Sir Isaiah Berlin, London, 1957 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** London, Tooth & Sons, 1954, no. 23; and July-Sept. 1957, no. 15.

**Description:** *An orange-tree in a grey planter behind an iron railing. The leaves of the orange-tree merge with those of a tall tree rising up over the dark shrubbery lining the alley. (JS)*

This painting, together with IV-150, is sketched in Vuillard's Journal under the date 7 August 1894 (see ill.). We clearly recognise the kind of balustrade bordering the raised terraces of the Tuileries gardens.



E. V., Journal, I.2, fol. 48r. (7 August 1894).



V-44



V-45



## V-46

## The Tuileries

c. 1894  
Oil on cardboard, 30 × 51 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris, c. 1942 – Current whereabouts unknown.

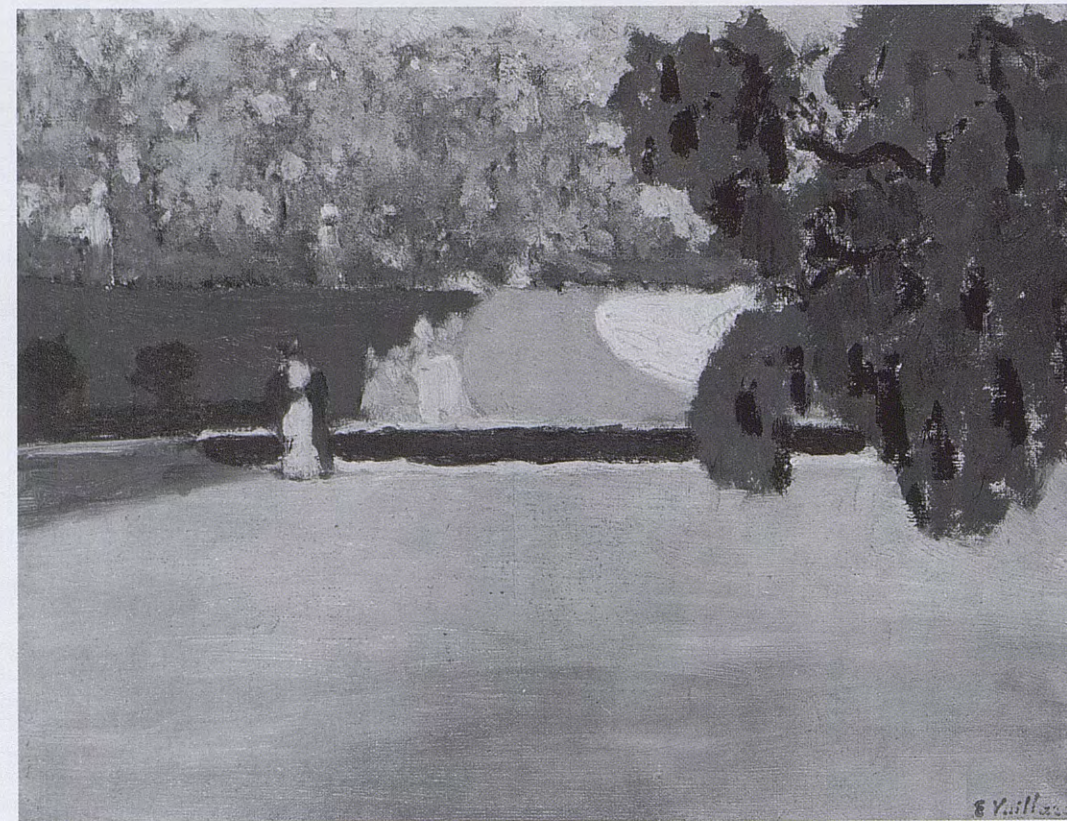
**Exhibition:** Paris, Carré, 1942, no. 9 [*Les Tuileries*, c. 1910].

**Description:** *The Tuileries in an evening light. The ground is grey, the foliage green and ochre. The post that stands out sharply on the left is iron-grey. The cardboard support is visible beneath the flower-beds on the right.* (AC)



V-46

The mood of this evening scene is an unusual one for Vuillard and is reminiscent of the early works of John Singer Sargent, several of which depicted the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris.



V-47

## V-47

## The Tuileries Gardens

c. 1894  
Oil on canvas, 26.5 × 34.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Silberman, New York – Harold Kaye, New York – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948 (not in cat.).

**Description:** *The sunlit area in the foreground is pale beige throughout, while a band of ultramarine evokes the pond. Between a grey-green lawn on the left and some overhanging red foliage on the right, a path curves up from the centre of the composition. A couple on the left are walking round the pond, the woman wearing a pink dress. Blue patches in the sky.* (JS)



V-48

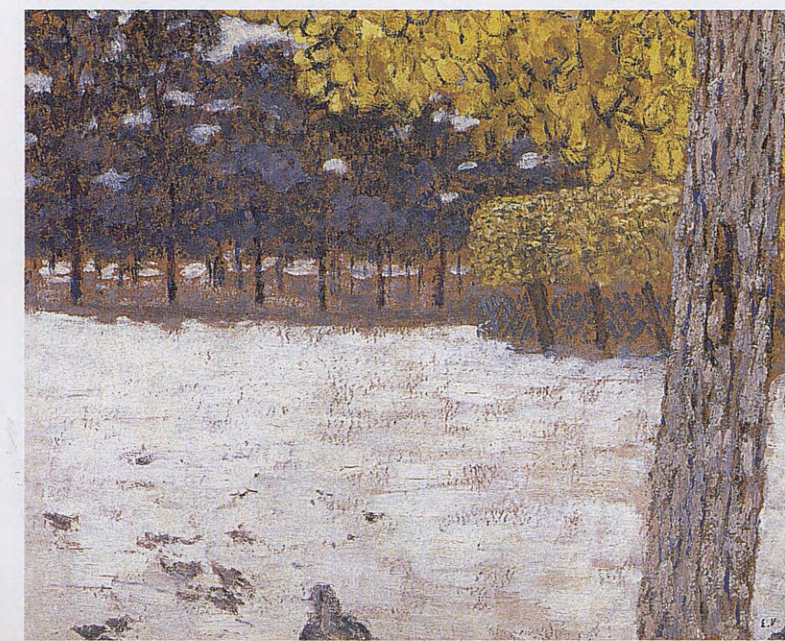
## V-48

## Figures by the Pond in the Tuileries

c. 1894  
Oil on panel, 21.5 × 27 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Dubourg, Paris, c. 1943 – Girard, Paris – Private collection.

**Description:** *The black pond contrasts sharply with the yellow sand. Green and black foliage under an evening sky. Pink and ochre highlights play over the figures.* (AC)



V-49

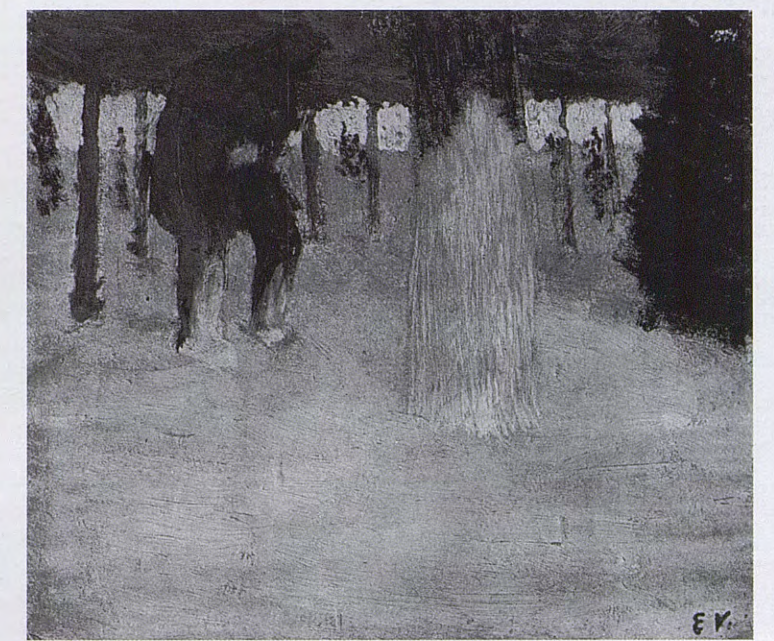
## V-49

## The Tuileries Gardens

c. 1894-95  
Oil on cardboard, 25.5 × 31.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Alfred Athis Natanson, Paris – Private collection, Paris – Galerie Hopkins-Custot, Paris, 2002.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Berès, May 1957, no. 70 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 22 – Paris, Carnavalet, 1961, no. 122 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 22 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 34 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 50 (ill.)



V-50

**Bibliography:** Jalard 1966, p. 61.

**Description:** *The sunlit sand is a dazzling white. To the right is the brightly lit trunk of a pale grey tree, its bark streaked with ultramarine. Alternating rows of bluish trees, with gaps of white and pale-blue sky in the background. The yellow-green leaves at the top are heavily outlined with bluish purple and cast blue shadows on the earth.* (JS)

## V-50

## The Tuileries

c. 1894-95  
Oil on panel, 17.5 × 20.5 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris, c. 1942 – Current whereabouts unknown.



## V-51

# The Friends or Evening, Two Women Seated on a Bench in a Public Garden, at Dusk

1895

Oil on cardboard, 29 × 39.5 cm

Signed and dated, lower right:

*E Vuillard 95*

Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** A. Level, Paris, 1896, 100 F – Level sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 3 March 1927, lot 127 [*Deux femmes sur un banc, le soir*] (ill.) – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 24879), 10,200 F – Georges Petit, Paris, 5 Jan. 1929, 16,000 F – Valentin Abdy, Paris – Georges Schick, Paris – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 12 May 1962, lot 186 (ill.) – Schoneman, New York – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Bibliography:** *GBA* 11, no. 854, March 1934, p. 175 (ill.), fig. 10 – Mauner 1978, p. 245, fig. 112.

**Description:** *Two women sitting close together on a park bench, one apparently consoling the other. They are framed by trees. To the right are two amusing female silhouettes and, to the left, a chair. A figure is seen walking in the background.* (JS)

The subject – two women embracing on a bench – is an unusual one for Vuillard and has none of the explosive charge of Toulouse-Lautrec's variations on the same theme. Mauner spoke of them enthusiastically: 'The same silence pervades all these paintings – which are openly mystical – and everything resides in the fusion of details into a highly intimate rapport, whether

between the figures themselves or between the figures and their surroundings. Vuillard liked to use the straight lines of benches as a structural device around which his touches of colour and rich textures circulate freely without losing any of their charm.'

## V-52

# Woman and Child in a Public Garden

c. 1894-95

Oil on cardboard, 16 × 18.5 cm

Stamp 3, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown



V-52



V-51

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 23 March 1994, lot 4 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

## V-53

# The Grey Pinafore

c. 1895

Pastel on cardboard (?), 25 × 19 cm

Stamp 2, lower left

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *A lady in black and a little girl in grey on a garden path.* (AC)



V-53

## V-54

# On a Bench

1895

Oil on cardboard, 26.5 × 45 cm

Signed and dated, lower right:

*E Vuillard 95*

Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Dr Louis Henri Vaquez, Paris – Jos Hessel, Paris – Georges Renand, Paris, 1938 – Renand sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris, 20 Nov. 1987, lot 42 (col. ill.) – Galerie Berès, Paris, and Galerie Bellier, Paris – Private collection, France.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Carré, 1942, no. 23 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 45 (ill.) – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 26 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 53 (ill.), 101 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 193 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 22 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 25 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 31 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 56 (ill.) – Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Le Prieuré, 1982-83, p. 123, no. 72 (ill.) – Paris, Grand Palais, 1983, no. 62 – Paris, Berès, 1988 (col. ill.); and 1990, no. 114 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** *Beaux-Arts*, 20 June 1942, p. 1 (ill.) – Dorival 1943, p. 128 – *L'Amour de l'art*, no. 6, Nov. 1945, p. 153 (ill.) – Chastel 1948, col. pl. 7 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 73, 105, 115 – *Life* 37, no.

18, 1 Nov. 1954, p. 77 (col. ill.) – *Arts*, no. 520, 15-21 June 1955, p. 14 (ill.) – Dorival 1957, p. 22 – *Lettres françaises*, 1 June 1961, p. 1 (ill.) – Preston 1971, p. 34, fig. 45 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 114-115, fig. 70 – Mauner 1978, p. 245, fig. 111 – Georges 1982, pp. 103, 160 – Warnod 1988, pp. 5 (col. ill.), 6 – Makarius 1989, pp. 9, 12 (ill.), 85 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, p. 74 (ill.).

**Description:** *Sitting at the end of a green bench streaked with yellow, an elderly lady dressed in black, and wearing a dark hat decorated with flowers, bends forward slightly, while a small boy in a straw hat looks up at her. The boy's loosely tied blue bow and his pink belt are the only bright notes in this otherwise markedly soft-focus little composition. The neutral-coloured wall is more brightly lit towards the right, where the edge of the composition is sealed off by the trunks of two small trees. The varnish has browned the cardboard support on the right.* (AC)

The monochrome masonry and fine pink and blue highlights of a wall in the Tuilleries is a magnificent detail. As always, Vuillard is remarkably good at setting a scene with a few deft brushstrokes. Everything about this painting, from the boy's broad-brimmed hat, sailor-suit and bow to the mildly comical character of the poses (the advice, the little scoldings), suggests the painter was drawing on childhood memories of outings to the park

with *Grand-mère* Michaud. No one was more familiar with the joys of family life and the wiles of well-behaved children than Vuillard. Bernard Dorival has stressed the harmonious imbalance of the painting and the ironic counterpoint created by the figure of the grandmother dressed in mourning black: 'In *The Bench*, the black bulk of the old lady sitting on the far right of the bench is not counterbalanced by anything on the left, yet the painting has a striking rhythm. Unexpected lay-outs and bold contrasts between solids and hollows afford Vuillard an opportunity to show off his skills, but to do so with such tact that we only notice them upon further reflection. Vuillard was arguably the most skilled of the Nabis... His dislike of grandiloquence is so extreme that he is only happy with whispering. Everything in his work is surreptitious, reserved, understated; even irony is tinged with a good-humoured tenderness that takes the sting out of it, and joy with a melancholy that dampens it and is enormously likeable and appealing.'

<sup>1</sup> Dorival 1943, p. 128.



V-54





V-55

### V-55 The Nursemaid

c. 1894  
Oil on cardboard with distemper  
underpainting, 28.3 × 21.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Schmit, Paris  
– Private collection

**Description:** A woman in a black dress and white apron sits on a stone bench in a sort of deserted park with light-coloured earth. An infant in a yellow dress is seated in her lap. Behind them can be seen the hood of a pram, and, to their left, a boy in a beige-coloured costume and straw hat, leaning down from the bench and playing with a doll. In the foreground, the silvery-grey trunk of a tree touched with pink and black highlights neatly bisects the canvas. Green foliage shading into yellow at the top. (AC)

The ambiguity of this scene is extreme. Initially, we see only two figures, the nursemaid

and the baby she holds in her arms; only gradually do we discern the boy in the bistre-coloured costume lying on the bench. The rendering of perspective, with the realistic silvery-grey tree-trunk in the fore-



Edgar Degas, *Jockeys before the Race*, c. 1891, oil, essence and pastel on paper. Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham (Great Britain).

ground bisecting the picture-plane and disrupting our angle of vision, is similar to that in certain Degas paintings, such as *Jockeys before the Race* (see ill.). Vuillard magnified this device in one of the *Public Gardens* panels, *Little Girls Playing* (V-39.1), in which a tree likewise interferes with our view. The only bright note in the otherwise beige-brown-grey austerity of the composition is the clump of green trees at top left.

### V-56 Woman Seated on a Bench

c. 1894  
Oil on canvas, 41 × 33 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Roussio, Paris – Private collection, Paris.



V-56

### V-57 Nursemaid with a Child in a Sailor-Suit

1895  
Oil on cardboard, 24.3 × 25.2 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right:  
*E Vuillard / 95*  
The Phillips Collection, Washington  
D.C., Acc. no. 2015

**Provenance:** Alfred Sutro, London (?) – Jos Hessel, Paris – Knoedler, New York, 1935 – The Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington D.C., 1939.

**Exhibitions:** Chicago, Art Institute, 1938-39, no. 27 – Washington D.C., Phillips Memorial Gallery, 1939, no. 5.

**Bibliography:** Washington D.C., Phillips, 1952, p. 104.

### V-58 Nursemaids in a Public Garden

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 22.3 × 57.5 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris – Léon Delaroche, Paris – M. Lignel, Paris – Galerie Schmit, Paris, c. 1991.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 38 [*Les Nourrices, square Vintimille*] –



V-58



V-57

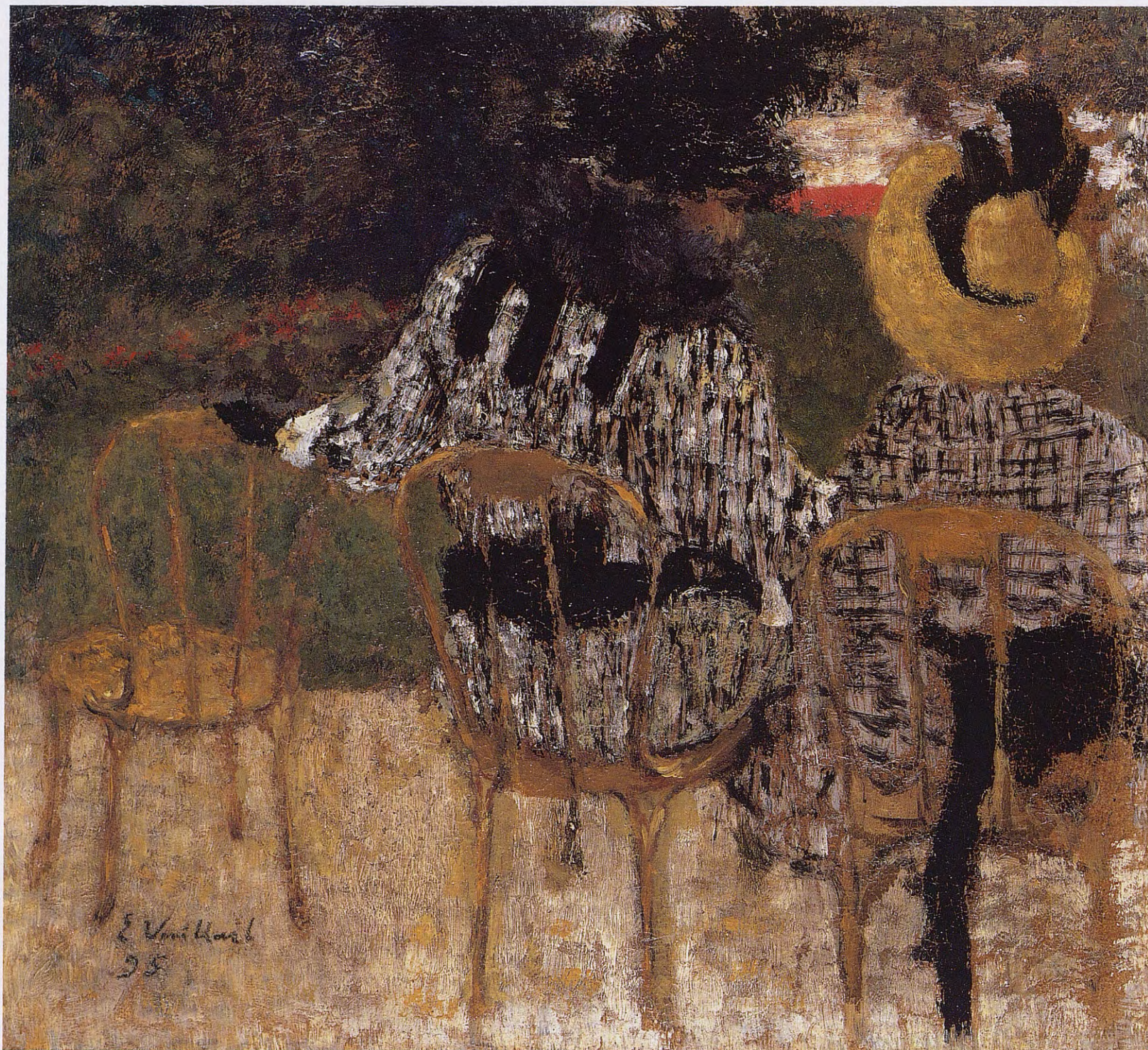
Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 31 (ill.) – Paris, Schmit, 1991, no. 38 (col. ill.) – Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 22, p. 35 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 155 – Georges 1982, p. 103 – Groom 1993, p. 34, col. fig. 48.

Vuillard here adopts the same elongated horizontal format that he had used for the *Desmarais Overdoor Panels* (V-21) and would later employ, around 1900, for *Landscape at Romanel* (VIII-3). It is hard to tell, however, whether it is the square de la Trinité or the square Vintimille that is depicted; though Vuillard was not yet living in the apartment overlooking the square Vintimille (he moved

to the rue de Calais only in 1908), the garden in question was only a five-minute walk from his studio in the rue Pigalle. If the scene does indeed depict the square Vintimille, then the nursemaids will have been viewed from the oval esplanade in the middle of the square, with Vuillard positioned more or less where the statue of Berlioz now stands (the statue was installed in 1895 to replace one of Napoleon, removed a few years earlier). Beyond the first screen of trees behind the benches can be seen a second, more bluish line of vegetation, a detail that does not argue in favour of the place Vintimille, the square being too small for more than a single row of trees.





V-59

**V-59**  
**Square de la Trinité or Two**  
**Women in a Public Garden**

1895  
 Oil on cardboard, 24.8 × 27.3 cm  
 Signed and dated, lower left:  
*E Vuillard / 95*  
 Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 2 July 1943, lot 88 (ill.) – Girard, Paris – Galerie Schmit, Paris – Paul Mellon Collection, Upperville (Virginia) – Donated to the *National Appeal to save the Stubbs Haymakers and Reapers* for auction, Tate Gallery, London, 8 Dec. 1977, lot 54 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 6 Dec. 1983, lot 28 (col. ill.) – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 22, p. 41 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Clay 1971, pp. 262-263 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 103.

**Description:** Two women seen from behind, seated on metal chairs on a path before a lawn. Their dresses are criss-crossed with black and white designs. The one on the right appears to be younger and is wearing a straw hat; the one on the left rests a hand on the back of a chair. A small vermilion hedge glimmers in the middle of the lawn. (JS)

**V-60**

**Woman with Elbows**  
**Propped on a Low Wall**

c. 1895  
 Oil on cardboard, 23 × 25 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower right  
 Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1942 – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 24 June 1963, lot 96 (ill.) – Galerie Schmit, Paris, c. 1971 – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Schmit, 1973 (not in cat.).

**Description:** The bust of a woman in dark clothes and a white hat, leaning on an ochre-coloured parapet. Ochre and dark blue throughout. (AC)



V-60

**V-61**

**Children Being Let**  
**out of School**

c. 1895  
 Tempera and gouache on cardboard, 37.5 × 32.5 cm  
 Signed, lower left: *EVuillard*  
 Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, I.N. 3018

**Provenance:** Reid & Lefevre, London, 1931 – Étienne Bignou, Paris, 26 July 1938 – Henri Blum, Paris – Jacques Blomet, Paris – Galerie Berès, Paris, and Roland, Browse & Delbanco, London – Matthiesen, London – E. J. Van Wisselingh, Amsterdam – Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, 1969.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1949, no. 212 – London, Matthiesen, 1962, no. 27 (ill.) – Amsterdam, Van Wisselingh, 1965, no. 30 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Rostrup 1977, p. 49, pl. XLVI.

**Description:** Three rather entertaining silhouettes seen against a background of neutral asphalt. On the left is a girl in a dark-grey smock, with her satchel hanging from her hand; to the right, a second young girl in a pale-blue frock. In the background, standing in front of a grey and black wall skirted by a pavement, are a number of figures, including a woman in a black skirt and white apron in the centre. Cardboard support visible throughout. (JS)



V-61





V-62

### V-62 Little Girl in an Orange Shawl

c. 1894-95  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
panel, 29.2 x 17.5 cm  
Signed, upper right: *E Vuillard*  
National Gallery of Art, Washington  
D.C., 1970.17.90

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Edward Molyneux,  
Paris, c. 1952 – Mrs. Ailsa Mellon Bruce, New  
York, 1955 – Ailsa Mellon Bruce bequest to the  
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1970.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948 (not in cat.)  
– Palm Beach, Society of the Four Arts, 1958,  
no. 43 – San Francisco, Legion of Honor, 1961,  
no. 69 (ill.) – Washington D.C., National Gallery  
of Art, 1966, no. 171 (ill.); and 1978, p. XVI (col.  
ill.), pp. 92, 93 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Clay 1971, p. 263 (col. ill.) – Wash-  
ington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1975,  
pp. 370, no. 2462, 371 (ill.) – Walker 1975,  
no. 895, p. 585 (col. ill.) – Terrasse 1980, p. 120,  
col. pl. 24 – Georges 1982, pp. 73, 152 – Daniel  
1984, pp. 119, 121, fig. 39 – Warnod 1988, p.  
19 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *A little girl in a red-spotted dress and  
orange shawl, with a blue ribbon in her hair, holding  
the brown hand of a man wearing black trousers and  
a dark grey jacket. On the grey road, a few silhouettes  
can be seen, one of whom has a red blouse. (JS)*

Vuillard has come a long way since *Young  
Girls Strolling* (V-17). We might almost be  
looking at a 'snapshot': the road is shown  
exactly as it presents itself to the eye, with-  
out any attempt at a scenic arrangement.  
The painting is simply a record of the artist  
framing and focusing his gaze. The faltering  
steps of the little girl contrast with the  
monumental presence of the man, the lower  
part of whose body alone enters the frame.  
The otherwise dull tones are disrupted by  
the fiery orange shawl, the spots on the grey  
dress and the blue ribbon in the little girl's  
hair.



V-63

### V-63 In the Omnibus

c. 1894-95  
Oil on cardboard, 25 x 22.9 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles,  
The Armand Hammer Permanent  
Collection, AH 1991.45

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Selig-  
mann, New York – Dalzell Hatfield, Los Angeles  
– Mrs. Ala Story, Santa Barbara (California) –  
Stephen Hahn, New York – Dr Armand Hammer,  
United States, 1969 – Sale, Christie's, London,  
2 July 1974, lot 37 (col. ill.), bought in – Gift of  
Armand Hammer to UCLA Hammer Museum,  
Los Angeles.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Hammer Galleries, 1968  
(col. ill.) – Memphis, Brooks Museum, 1969,

no. 63 (ill.) – United States, travelling exhib., 1970-  
71, no. 70 (col. ill.) – Los Angeles-London-Dublin,  
1971-72, no. 40 (col. ill.) – Paris, Louvre and  
Jacquemart-André, 1977, no. 41 (col. ill.) – Los  
Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
1980, no. 44 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** *Réalités*, no. 373, March 1977,  
p. 78, cover (col. ill.).

A painting by Maurice Delondre around  
1880 (see ill.) confirms that this scene is  
indeed set in an omnibus: we recognize the  
small glass panel in which the number of the  
bus is written, along with the slightly bev-  
elled roof and the windows through which  
the little girls can observe the horses draw-  
ing the vehicle. The detail of the little girls  
dressed in the English style then in vogue  
and standing on tiptoe to get a glimpse of



Maurice Delondre, *In the Omnibus*, c. 1880,  
oil on canvas, Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

the street outside is particularly enchanting.  
Their dull grey coats contrast with the sump-  
tuous purple of their large hats.



## V-64

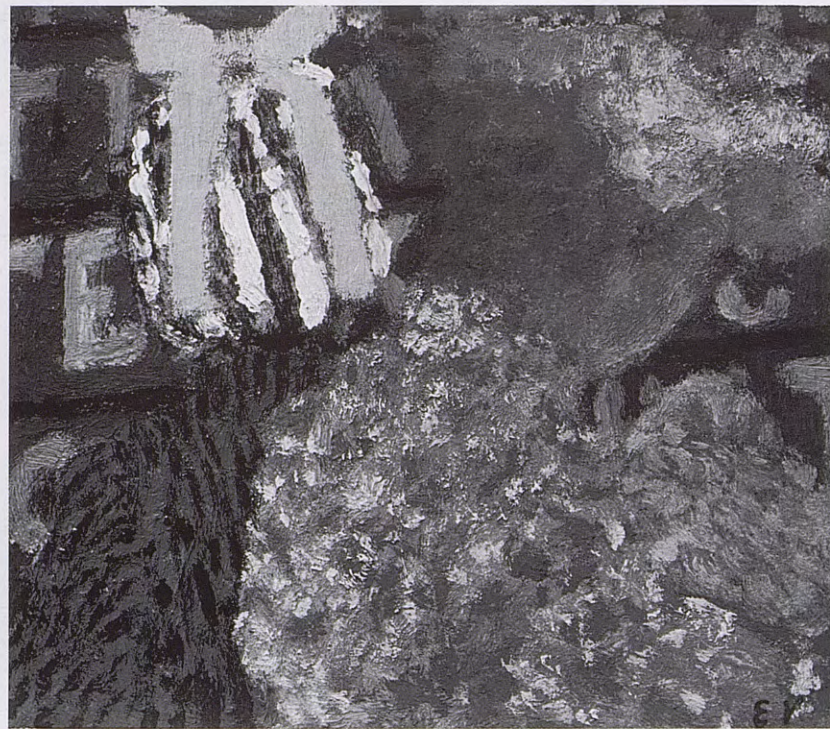
## Nursemaid

c. 1894-95  
Oil on cardboard, 15 × 18 cm  
Stamp 4, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Maurice Brianchon, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 22 (col. ill.); and 1954, p. 28 (ill.) – Georges 1982, pp. 48-49, 103.

**Description:** *The overlapping busts of two women standing in front of a green board with large white letters. The nursemaid, seen from behind, is wearing a dark-green dress flecked with black; the second woman, seen in three-quarters profile, has a beige blouse flecked with brown and holds in her arms a baby whose pink frock blends harmoniously with the rest of the painting. (JS)*



V-64



V-65



V-66

## V-65

## Young Woman in a Plaid Blouse

c. 1894-95  
Pastel on paper, 31.7 × 15.5 cm  
Stamp 2, lower left  
Art market, New York

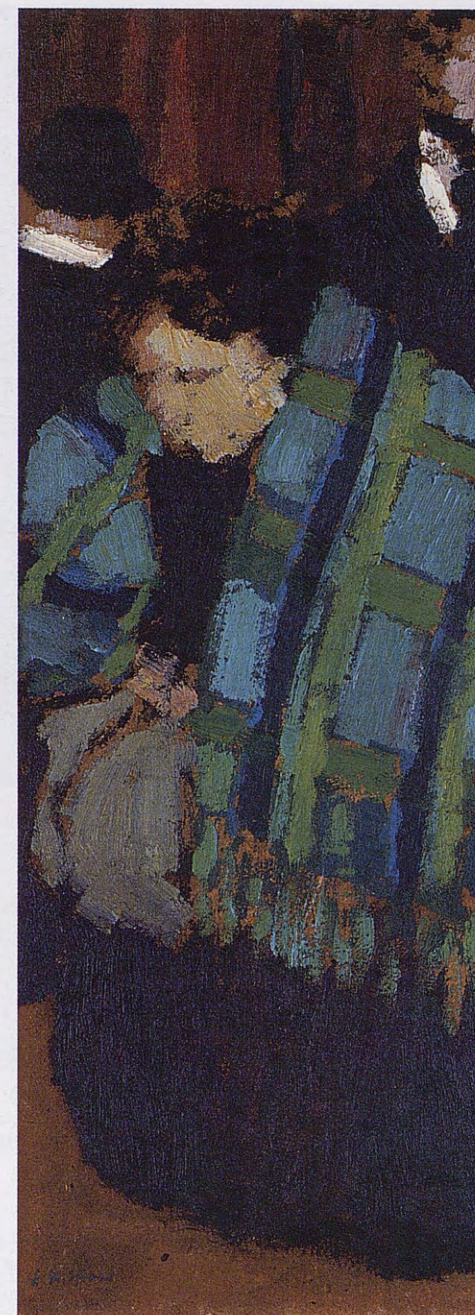
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Knoedler, New York.

## V-66

## The Hat with Flowers

c. 1894  
Pastel on paper, 33 × 15 cm  
Stamp 5, lower right  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection – Private collection, Paris.



V-67



V-68

## V-67

## Woman with a Green Plaid Shawl

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 31.5 × 12 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, United States.

**Provenance:** Jacques Rodrigues, Paris, c. 1935 – Renou et Poyet, Paris, c. 1981 – Galerie Bellier, Paris, 1984 – Private collection, Washington D.C.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Druet, 1930, no. 95.

## V-68

## The Plaid Boater

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 32 × 19 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris, c. 1942 – Galerie Georges Moos, Geneva, c. 1946 – Private collection, Winterthur (Switzerland), c. 1949.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Carré, 1942, no. 13 [*La Femme au canotier*, c. 1897] – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 80 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 8 [*Portrait de Madame Serr*] – Winterthur, Kunstmuseum, 1949 (not in cat.) – Zurich, 1964, no. 139.

**Bibliography:** Chassé 1960, col. pl. 41 – 'Antologia', 1967, p. 371 (ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 43 – Berger 1992, p. 202 (ill.).

**Description:** *The girl's profile contrasts sharply with the brown background and patches of foliage are framed against a grey sky in the rectangular window. Her hair and clothes are black. The plaid boater dominates the composition with its amusing, multi-coloured brilliance. (AC)*



V-69

**The Black Belt**

c. 1895  
Oil on paper, mounted on canvas,  
16.8 × 16.8 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York – Private collection, New York.

**Description:** A woman in a grey skirt, yellow blouse and black belt, viewed from behind, opening a door. Blue and grey walls. To the left is a mass of shrubbery topped with pink flowers. A second figure is sketched on the right. (AC)



V-69



V-70

V-70

**The Reprimand**

c. 1894  
Oil on cardboard, 29 × 22 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Fondation Bemberg, Toulouse (France),  
2102

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, c. 1947 – Fondation Bemberg, Toulouse.

**Description:** To the right, against a grey background, stands a tall, stout figure in a bowler hat, frock coat and light-coloured trousers. His face is light pink, and pen-strokes have been used to indicate the mouth, the pince-nez and the sideburns. In the left half of the picture, against a brown background, is a woman dressed in blue-black, hiding her head in her hands. Vuillard was long to remain fond of these enigmatic little scenes, with their surprising details. (AC)



V-71

V-71

**Woman with a Hat-Veil**

c. 1895  
Oil on unprimed cardboard,  
21.3 × 26 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris – Hanover, London – Arthur Jeffress, London – Lefevre, London, 1956 – Jacques Helft, Paris, 1956 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 4 Dec. 1985, lot 127 (col. ill.), bought in – Art market, Paris, 1992 – Private collection, France – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 28 Nov. 1995, lot 188 (col. ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** London, Hanover, 1948, no. 9.

**Description:** The bust of a woman in a beige jacket, a lace-fronted blouse and a blue-patterned hat with a veil. To the left, behind the bench-seat, are a man with a pink shirtfront and boater, and a woman in a black hat, leaning over a piece of furniture surmounted by a mirror. (AC)



V-72

V-72

**At the Buffet**

c. 1894-95  
Oil on canvas, 34 × 26 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Description:** A quick sketch of a swarthy-faced gentleman in evening dress, standing next to a buffet table and conversing with a woman. (AC)

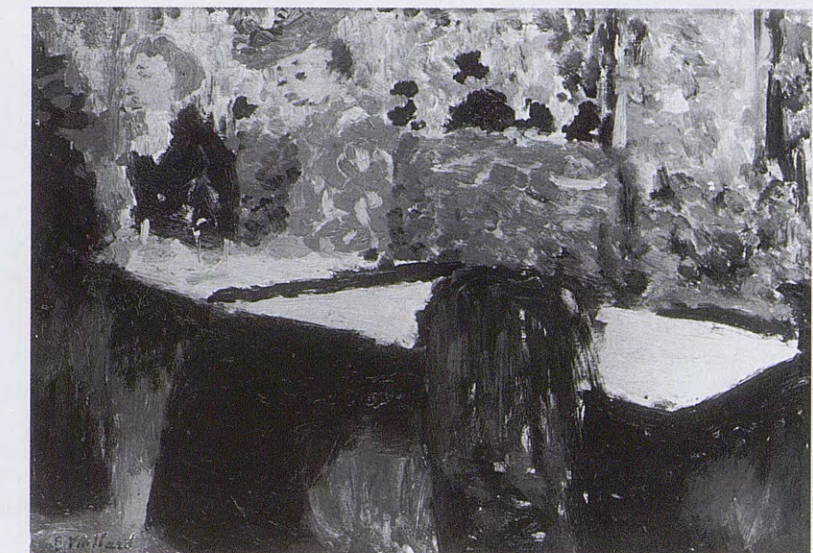
V-73

**At the Café**

c. 1895  
Oil on wood, 24 × 33 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

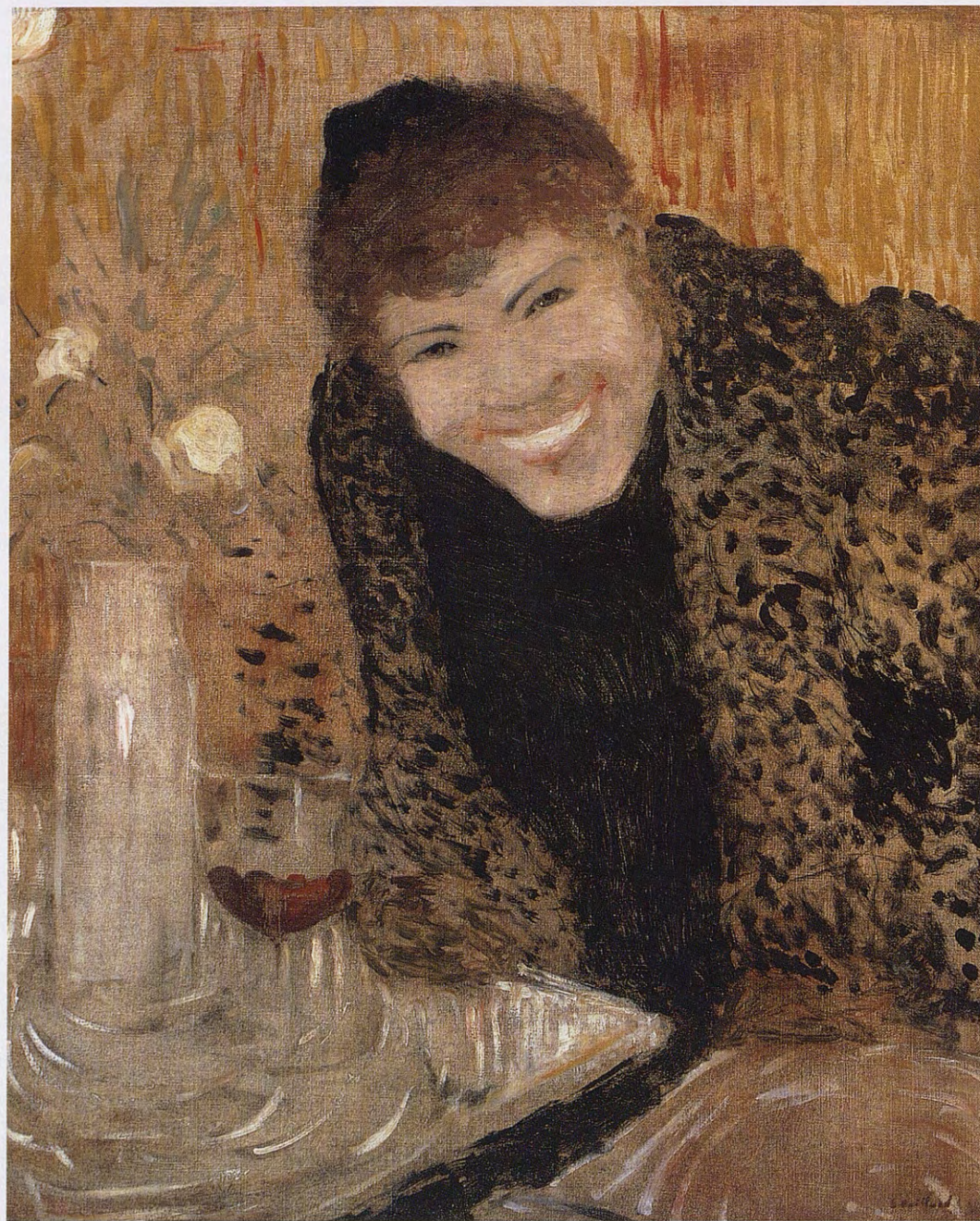
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1943 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A woman in red and a man in black, seated on a brownish-red bench-seat to the left of a table. The table is bare, and the back of a chair can be seen in the right foreground. The table-tops have a greenish sheen. A few figures in black can be seen above the bench-seat. (AC)



V-73





V-74

### V-74 Paul's Sin

c. 1895  
Oil on canvas, 64 × 53.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Mayor, London – O'Hana, London, c. 1966 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 7 April 1976, lot 66 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Christie's, London, 3 July 1979, lot 69 (col. ill.) – Waddington Galleries, London – Sale, Christie's, New York, 11 Nov. 1987, lot 213 (col. ill.) – Galerie Schmit, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** London, O'Hana, 1966, no. 49 (ill.) – Paris, Schmit, 1991 (not in cat.) – St. Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 23, p. 94 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A woman with dark auburn hair, wearing a black dress and an astrakhan coat, is seen virtually full-face as she leans forward with a broad smile. On the metal tray to the left are a carafe with three flowers in it and a half-empty glass of wine. (JS)

The reflections on the glass table-top are striking. The concentric circles seem to sweep the carafe and wine-glass up in their dizzying spirals. The red wine is echoed by the line of scarlet around the young woman's lips. Rather unusually, Vuillard has

given almost masculine features to the woman, a *demi-mondaine* or prostitute (possibly even a transvestite, in which case she would constitute a very great sin indeed) thought to have been one of Paul Sérusier's mistresses (hence the title) and here shown seated at a table in a pose worthy of Toulouse-Lautrec. The night-life depicted by Vuillard is never short of surprises.

### V-75 Woman with a Cup of Coffee

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, 30 × 21 cm  
Stamp 2, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Captain Richard A. Peto, Isle of Wight (Great Britain) – Odo Cross and Angus Wilson, London, 1948 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 31 March 1965, lot 81 (col. ill.), bought in – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Mrs. P. F. Matthews, London – Sale, Palais des Congrès, Versailles, 27 Nov. 1983, lot 53 (col. ill.), bought in – Private collection, 1984.

**Exhibitions:** Southampton, Art Gallery, 1947 – London, Hanover Gallery, 1948, no. 6 – London, Tooth & Sons, Nov.-Dec. 1965, no. 22; and April-May 1969, no. 16 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Boyle-Turner 1993, pp. 50, 51 (col. ill.).

This stiff and deliberately exaggerated portrayal shows that Vuillard was perfectly capable of caricaturing women. The sullen face of the figure at table, and the delight (everywhere apparent in his *Journal* for 1889 and 1890) that the painter all too clearly takes in caricature, make of this work a kind of metaphysical 'mug-shot'. The tablecloth is shown floating against a red background that seems to soak up everything around it.



V-75

### V-76 Woman with Daisies

1894  
Oil on cardboard, 20.5 × 14.5 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left:  
*E Vuillard / 94*  
Private collection



V-76

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Paul de Laboulaye – Mr. and Mrs Alex M. Lewyt, New York – Private collection.

**Description:** A dark-haired young woman wearing a wide-brimmed, ochre-coloured hat, a black blouse and a dark yellow coat with daisies in the lapel. (AC)

### V-77 At the Café, Waiting

c. 1895-96  
Oil on canvas, 41 × 34 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.

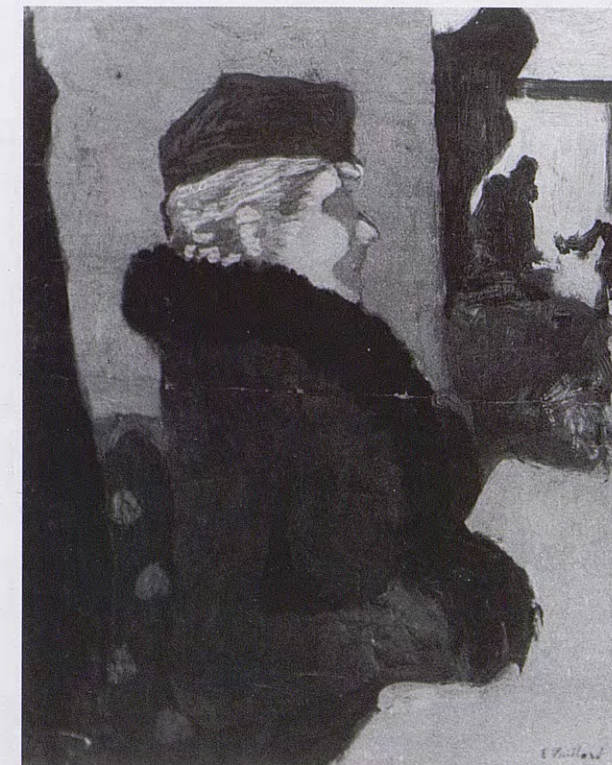
**Description:** A fair-haired woman in a blue toque, sitting on a red chair at a table laid with a pink tablecloth. The green wall breaks off on the right, revealing black silhouettes dancing against a pure yellow background. (AC)

### V-78 At the Buffet Table

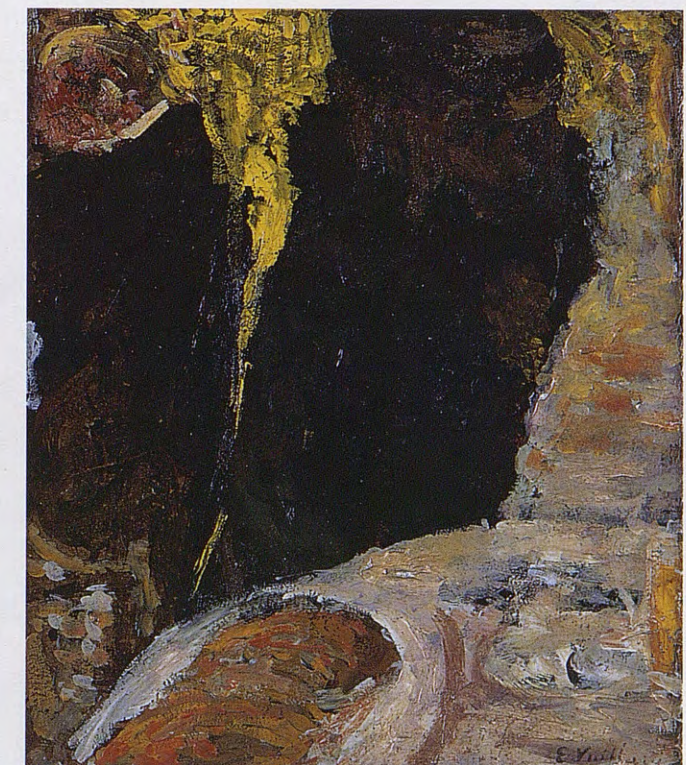
c. 1894-95  
Oil on cardboard, 23 × 20 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris, 8 June 2000, lot 3 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A woman in a black coat and hat leaning over a buffet table. To the left is a bald, red-faced man in evening dress. (AC)



V-77

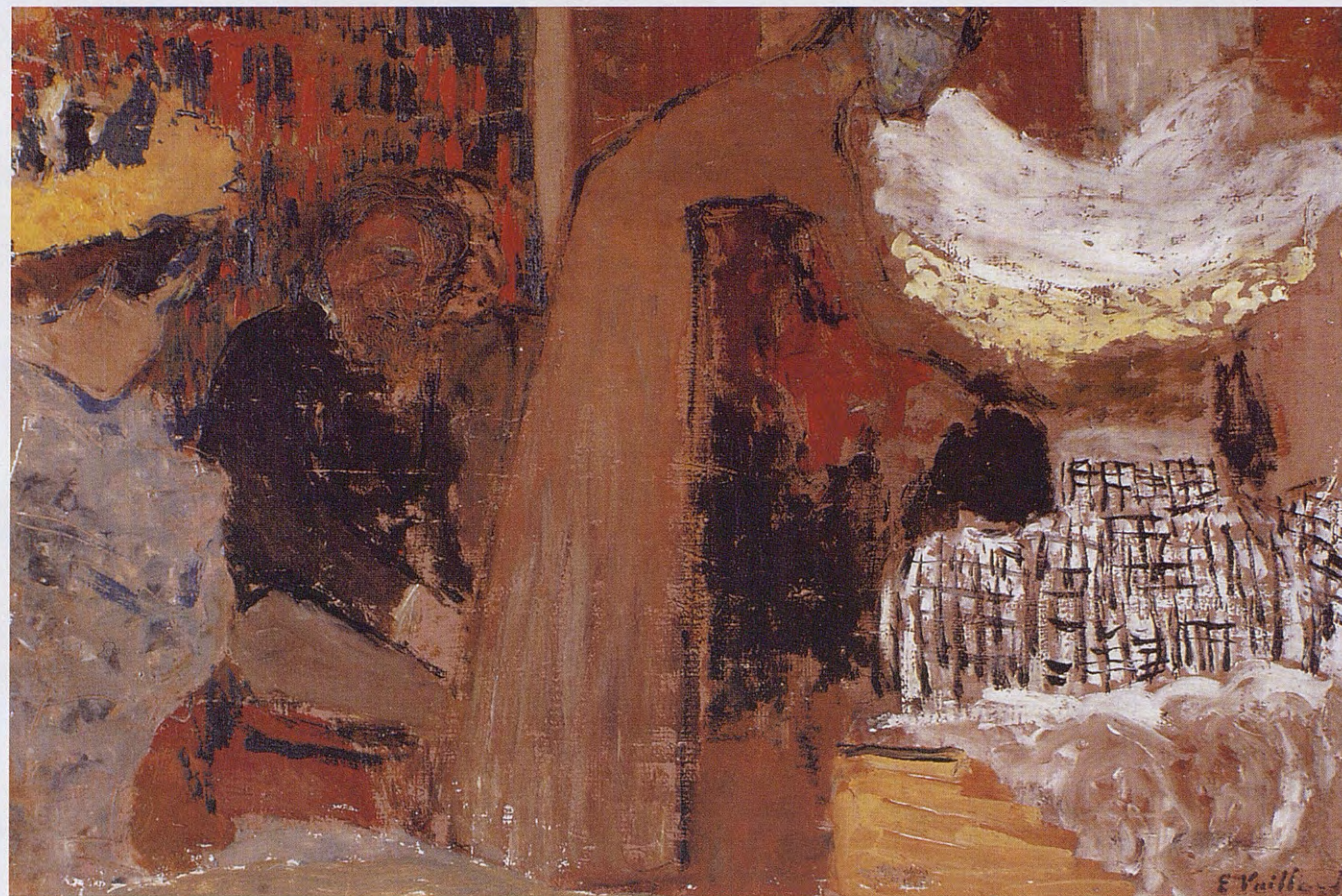


V-78





V-79



V-80



V-81

## V-79

## In the Garden at Night

c. 1895

Oil on cardboard, 24.2 × 33 cm

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Beyeler, Basle (Switzerland) – Ragnar Moltzau, Oslo – Marlborough Fine Art, London – Mrs. B. Jakober, London, 1964 – Sale, Christie's, London, 4 Dec. 1990, lot 269 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Christie's, New York, 24 March 1992, lot 10 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Basle, Beyeler, 1956, no. 14 – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1957, no. 120 – London, Marlborough, 1959, no. 82 (ill.).

## V-80

## The Fortune-Teller

c. 1895-97

Oil on canvas, 24.5 × 36 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Private collection, Great Britain, 1960 – Sale, Christie's, London, 29 June 1999, lot 23 (col. ill.) – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris.

**Exhibition:** London, Tooth & Sons, April-May 1969, no. 28 (ill.) [*L'Essayage du chapeau*, c. 1900].

**Description:** *To the right are the head and shoulders of a woman seen from the back, wearing a checked blouse and a straw hat decorated with white tulle (there is also some form of feathery garment thrown over the back of her ochre-coloured chair). To the left, against a black and scarlet background, are a bearded man dressed in brown and a woman in a yellow hat, and, in the middle of the composition, a slim, tall figure stooping down. A picturesque sketch that is particularly difficult to interpret. (AC)*

The arrangement of the seated figures suggests they are some kind of audience that assembled in a middle-class apartment rather than a music-hall or a cabaret. The straight, plain dress worn by the figure in the centre, similar to the robes used in experimental theatre at that time, is designed to stylise gesture and emphasise the postures of the body. The painting, we believe, depicts a fortune-teller, invited to perform in some-

one's salon (the Natansons', perhaps?); alternatively, some form of spiritualist gathering.

## V-81

## Woman and Child at a Café-Concert

c. 1895

Oil on cardboard, 24 × 29 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland), c. 1947 – Private collection, Winterthur (Switzerland).

**Exhibitions:** Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 17 [*La Fête champêtre*] – Winterthur, Kunstmuseum, 1949, no. 224 – Zurich, 1964, no. 165.

**Description:** *The woman is seen à contre-jour, wearing a high collar wrapped in a grey shawl and holding a child in her lap. Behind her we see a balustrade and a seated audience, and, in the background, a ray of light and a brightly painted stage. (AC)*





V-82

## V-82

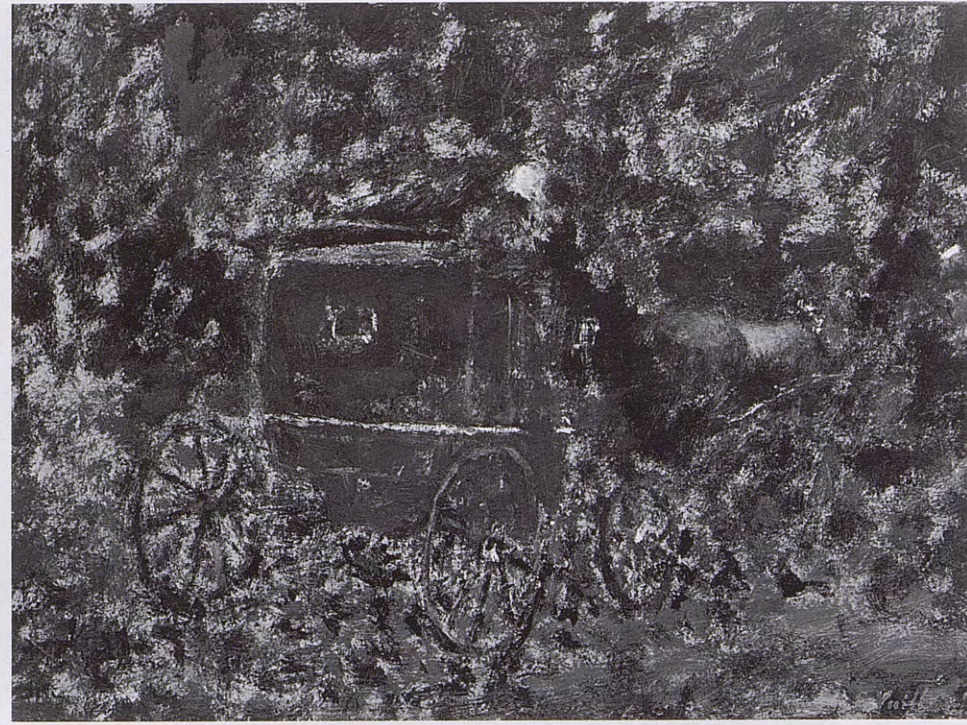
## Horse, Rue de Rivoli

c. 1895

Oil on cardboard, mounted  
on hardboard, 51 × 43 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alex Maguy, Paris – O'Hana, London – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 27 Nov. 1965, lot 81 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Salons du Trianon-Palace, Versailles, 1 Dec. 1968, lot 115 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 Dec. 1971, lot 35 (ill.) – Waddington Galleries, London – Sale, Christie's, London, 2 Dec. 1986, lot 173 (ill.) – Connaught Brown, London – Malcolm Wiener, New York – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** London, O'Hana, 1965, no. 57 (ill.); and 1966, no. 53 – New York, Marlborough-Gerson, 1966, no. 122 (ill.) – London, O'Hana, 1969, no. 96; and 1970, no. 85.



V-83

## V-83

## Hackney Coach, Evening

c. 1895

Oil on cardboard, 27.5 × 35 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York – Werner E. Josten, New York; Estate of Mrs. Werner Josten, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 13 May 1977, lot 621 (col. ill.) – Helen Frankenthaler, New York – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *Against the background of a street shrouded with black and white wisps of mist, a blue hackney carriage painted with red bands makes its way, glinting in places in the cold night air.* (AC)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1942 – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 6 July 1944, lot 939 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** *A brougham advances towards the right of the painting, the brightly coloured collars of the coachmen gleaming in the ill-lit avenue.* (AC)



V-84

## V-84

## A Brougham at Night

c. 1895

Oil on cardboard, 32 × 23 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

## V-85

## Night (of 14 July?)

c. 1895

Oil on cardboard, mounted  
on hardboard, 24.5 × 9 cm  
Stamp 4, lower left  
Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Klipstein & Kornfeld, Berne, 23 May 1962, lot 1126 (ill.) – Stephen Hahn, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 6 Oct. 1989, lot 27 (col. ill.) – Josefowitz Collection – Achim Moeller Fine Art, New York – Collection Jean-Claude Bellier, Paris.

It is hard to say whether the night in question is that of 14 July or not. What we actually see in the background are street-lamps, not Chinese lanterns; it could be any night of the year. That being said, Vuillard manages to conjure up, on a tiny surface a captivating nocturne. His relationship to the night is nothing if not tractable; his walks through Paris at night, alone or with friends, were crucial to him throughout his life, and he would have subscribed to these evocative lines by Verlaine in 'La Bonne Chanson' (1870):

*'Le bruits des cabarets, la fange des trottoirs,  
Les platanes déchus s'effeuillant dans l'air noir,  
L'omnibus, ouragan de ferraille et de boues,  
Qui grince, mal assis entre ses quatre roues,  
Et roule ses yeux verts et rouges lentement,  
Les ouvriers allant au club, tout en fumant  
Leur brûle-gueule au nez des agents de police,  
Toits qui dégouttent, murs suintants, pavé qui glisse,  
Bitume défoncé, ruisseaux comblant l'égout,  
Voilà ma route – avec le paradis au bout.'*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Paul Verlaine, *Œuvres*, NRF, Paris, 1938, p. 112, (transl. by A.S. Kline).

(The noise from bars, the pavement's mire,  
ruined sycamores leafing black air:  
the bus, a typhoon of mud and metal,  
bouncing, between wheels, with its rattle,  
rolling its red and green eyes slowly,  
workers off to the club, pipes smoking,  
under the noses of policemen, those drones,  
roofs dripping, walls sweating, slippery stones,  
broken asphalt, gutters where sewers blend,  
behold, my road – with paradise at the end.)



V-85





V-86

## V-86 Street

c. 1895  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on canvas,  
26.5 x 24 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Grey asphalt lined with brown shops with grey awnings (the awning on the left has red stripes) spreads across the foreground of this quick sketch. The facades of the buildings are rendered as a white grid. At top right, a small green patch marks the edge of a tree. (JS)



Pierre Bonnard, *Hackney-Coachmen and Motor Cars at Night*, c. 1908, oil on paper mounted on canvas. Private collection.



V-87

## V-87 Street at Night

c. 1895  
Pastel on paper, 30 x 30 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Bought from Vuillard by Comte and Comtesse Jean de Polignac, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 25200), 26 Jan. 1928, 7,000 F (exchanged for VII-475) – Brown Philipps, London, 8 June 1929, 16,000 F – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Bibliography:** Polignac 1965, p. 135.

This night view of Paris, in the style of Bonnard (see ill.), formerly belonged to Marie-Blanche de Polignac: 'We had bought, for ourselves, a small Vuillard pastel depicting a Paris street at night. We foolishly exchanged it later for a larger but less delicate canvas: *Young Girl in White, Rue de la Tour* [VII-475]'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Polignac 1965, p. 135.



V-88

## V-88 Factory at Night: the Tall Chimney

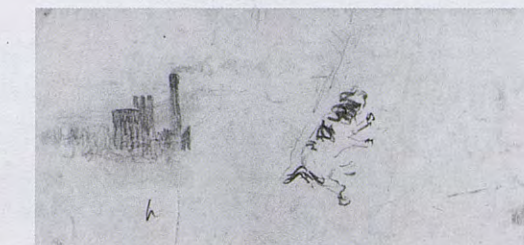
c. 1890 or c. 1895  
India ink, pastel and oil on cardboard,  
35 x 34 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Inscribed: 97  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – JPL Fine Arts, London, 1987 – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Stuttgart, Kunsthau Böhler, 1996, p. 33 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A dark brown factory with lighted windows and a bright round lamp near the centre, silhouetted against a violet evening sky. (AC)

The subject is a highly unusual one for Vuillard and is treated here in the manner of Seurat. The work is also very difficult to date. Thirty years ago it was assigned to circa 1914, and Vuillard did indeed depict factory interiors during the 1914-18 war (see X-32.1 and X-32.2). He had tried his hand at *nocturnes*, however, as early as 1888, and the work in question has a distinctly Nabi feel to it. A study-sheet that can be dated



E. V., Study Sheet, c. 1890, graphite on paper, 11 x 13 cm. Private collection.

circa 1890 (see ill.) depicts a factory with a smoking chimney-stack and might be a preliminary sketch for the work presented here. Furthermore, Vuillard stepped up his production of night scenes between 1895 and 1897. Here, he is interested in the oppressive façade and the anthropomorphic appearance of an industrial monster that, like the blue lantern near the centre of the composition, does not sleep at night. The use of mixed media, with the pigment being scratched with a spatula to render the smoke effects, and the unpainted cardboard support around the edges, further underscore the dreamlike appearance of the building.





V-89

## V-89

## Place du Palais-Royal

c. 1895

Oil on cardboard, 30 × 40 cm

Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Ernest Coquelin Cadet, Paris – Sale, Coquelin Cadet, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 26 May 1909, lot 54 [*Place du Palais-Royal*] – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 17401), 505 F – Alex Reid, Glasgow, 19 April 1919, part of a lot – Jos Crawford, Glasgow (Great Britain) – Herbert Einstein, London – Lefevre, London, 1942 – Mrs. P. Danne, London, 1943 – Mayor, London – Derek Jackson – Sale, Christie's, London, 20 May 1960, lot 49, bought in – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 3 Nov. 1983, lot 36 (col. ill.) – Aittouares, Paris – Sale, Christie's, London, 4 Dec. 1984, lot 433

(col. ill.) – Sale, Hôtel des Ventes, Enghien-les-Bains, 23 June 1985, lot 251 (col. ill.) – Galerie Berès, Paris – Malcolm Wiener, New York – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Dec. 1910, no. 41 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Jan.-Feb. 1937 – London, Reid & Lefevre, March-April 1943, no. 30.

**Bibliography:** *La Renaissance*, nos. 1-2, Jan.-Feb. 1937 (ill.) – Chastel 1946, p. 47 (ill.).

Mansart's building is immediately recognisable, despite being sparsely lit by the street lamps. Cabs are parked on the place du Palais-Royal, in all likelihood awaiting the end of a play at the Comédie-Française. Perhaps it was a performance to which Coquelin Cadet had invited his painter friend? Between 1895 and 1900, Vuillard

increased his production of *nocturnes* (boulevards, cafés-concerts, the gardens of Paris, the Bois de Boulogne), coming to resemble in this way his inseparable friend, Pierre Bonnard, an inveterate night-bird at the time (see ill.).



Pierre Bonnard, *Paris Boulevard at Night*, 1900, oil on cardboard, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

## V-90

## The Bourse

c. 1895-96

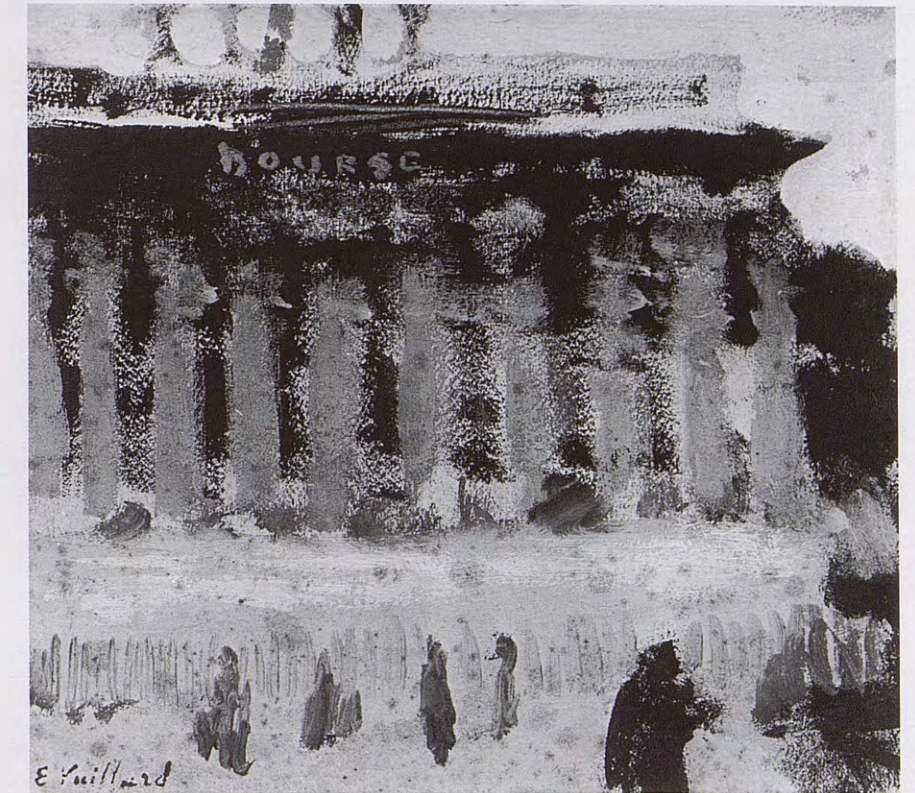
Glue-based distemper, gouache and ink on paper, 20 × 21.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Private collection, Great Britain

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie de la Présidence, Paris – Private collection, Great Britain, deposited with Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.

**Exhibition:** Stuttgart, Kunsthaus Bühler, 1996, p. 26 (col. ill.).



V-90

## V-91

## Centre of the Place de Clichy at Night

c. 1895

Oil on cardboard, 28 × 33 cm

Signed, lower right: *E. V.*

Fondation Bemberg, Toulouse (France), 2100

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland), 1949 – Private collection, Paris – Fondation Bemberg, Toulouse.

**Exhibition:** Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 19.

**Description:** *The plinth supporting the statue of Maréchal Moncey is seen at night and is rendered with green hues and red-brown shadows. Blue and brown silhouettes.* (AC)



V-91





V-92

## V-92

### Gentlemen in Black

c. 1895-99

Oil on cardboard, 58 × 35 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York – Dr Joseph Goldyne, San Francisco (California) – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibition:** New York, Wildenstein, 1983, p. 88.

**Description:** *Three gentlemen in black are assembled around a lamp with a green shade before a large ochre wall dappled with green and orange motifs. A red gleam next to the lamp. Areas of garnet-red carpet at the bottom.* (AC)

## V-93

### Conversation

c. 1895-99

Oil on cardboard, 22.5 × 34.5 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 10 June 1955, lot 120 – Marlborough, London – Sale, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 16 June 1959, lot 101 (ill.) – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 8 Dec. 1961, lot 87 (ill.) – Sale, Salons du Trianon-Palace, Versailles, 11 June 1965, lot 64 (ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.



V-93



V-94

**Exhibition:** London, Marlborough, Nov.-Dec. 1955, no. 80 (ill.).

**Description:** *A man with a white face framed by black hair and a thin black beard reclines with his legs akimbo on a black and dark-green sofa. Dressed in ultramarine blue, he is presented full-face, with one leg draped over the arm of the sofa. His form extends across most of the picture. In the right foreground is a rosy-complexioned man wearing black and seen in profil perdu. The wall is grey and hung with paintings.* (JS)

## V-94

### Seated Woman

c. 1896-99

Oil on cardboard, 32.5 × 27 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – O'Hana, London – Beyeler, Basle (Switzerland), c. 1960 – Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London – Henry Moore, Much Hadham (Great Britain) – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Didier Imbert, 1992, p. 121 (col. ill.).



## V-95

**Chestnut Trees** (cartoon for a stained-glass window)

1894-95

Glue-based distemper on cardboard, mounted on canvas, 110 x 70 cm  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Siegfried Bing, Paris – Bing sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 26 May 1909 – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 17454) – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 22 Dec. 1941, lot 111 – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 June 1956, lot 57 – Galerie Percier, Paris – Galerie Berri-Lardy, Paris, c. 1979 – Sale, Hôtel Rameau, Versailles, 4 June 1980, lot 41 (col. ill.) – Galerie Marcel Bernheim, Paris, March 1985 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 220 [*Projet de vitrail*] – Lyons-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 59, p. 68 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 23, p. 36 (col. ill.) – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 218 (col. ill.) – Chicago-New York, 2001, no. 34, p. 125 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Mauner 1978, pp. 159, 176, fig. 40 – Georges 1982, p. 83 – Weisberg 1986, pp. 49-52 – Thomson 1988, p. 32, col. pl. 23 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, pp. 182, 183 (ill.), – Frèches-Thory, exhib. cat., London and Paris, 1991-92, p. 400, fig. 478 – Boyle-Turner 1993, pp. 98, 99 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, p. 75, fig. 125 – Frèches-Thory, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 396 – Groom, exhib. cat., Chicago-New York, 2001, pp. 124, 125 (col. ill.).

After discovering the Favrite glass of Louis Comfort Tiffany during a trip to America between February and May 1894, Siegfried Bing, the art-dealer and entrepreneur who first introduced Japanese arts to France and would later become the chief sponsor of Art Nouveau, began commissioning work from Nabi artists through the intermediary of Henry Ibels. In a letter of May 1894, Vuillard announced Bing's proposal to Maurice Denis: 'My dear friend, here is a proposal from Ibels. He has made the acquaintance of Bing, the dealer of curiosities who, to assist *artistes-décorateurs*, would like to sell in France a special coloured glass which can be given, it would appear, all kinds of colours and gradations in the same tint while remaining transparent. He has some samples of this glass at his home and some articles pro-

duced by artists in that country (they are Americans). Ibels has told him about us and Bing is expecting us so that he can show us the ten samples; he would undertake to have our designs executed by others because the actual manufacturing process is a secret they are unwilling to reveal. Do you want to come and see this? It might interest you. Several of us have arranged to meet on Friday around 3 p.m. in my studio. Come along, it's you and Bonnard whom it risks interesting the most'.<sup>1</sup> By the end of October 1894, most of the Nabis had delivered their cartoons. In the end, Tiffany produced thirteen windows from cartoons by eleven French artists, eight of whom were Nabis: *Maternity* by Bonnard, *Landscape* by Maurice Denis, *Summer* by Ibels, *Flowering Harvest* by Ranson, *The Garden* by Rousset, *Three Small Windows* by Sérusier, *Parisian Ladies* by Vallotton and *Chestnut Trees* by Vuillard. The stained-glass windows were presented at the salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts on the Champ-de-Mars, which opened its doors on 25 April 1895. They were also exhibited later the same year at Bing's Salon de l'Art Nouveau. The most remarkable fact is that up until this point, Vuillard's street scenes had seldom been viewed from above (the exception being *Madame Vuillard Gazing out of a Window*, IV-108). In the present cartoon, the stylisation of the figures crossing the street or appearing at a window is remarkable. Furthermore, the play of precipitous perspectives is bolder than in any other Nabi composition. Vuillard has clearly converted his customary manner, composed of subtle little brushstrokes, into a radical Synthetism, adapting his technique to the requirements of stained-glass windows. It seems almost to foreshadow German Expressionism and calls to mind a street-scene by Georg Grosz in which a young woman at the corner of a building is three times larger in scale than the one in the window. The flagstones spin a sort of spider's web round the figures, while the stylisation of the chestnut-trees evokes wallpaper designs by Violet-le-Duc, as well as the manner in which Puvis de Chavannes – admired by Maurice Denis for precisely this – used to stylise his plant forms. 'Vuillard's originality lies in turning this motif to good geometrical account by heav-



E. V., sketch for *Chestnut Trees*, from the '1894' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 11.9 x 8.1 cm. Private collection.



E. V., sketch for *Chestnut Trees*, from the '1894' Sketchbook, graphite on paper, 11.9 x 8.1 cm. Private collection.

ily outlining the leaves destined to be set in the lead of the window'.<sup>2</sup> A rather different but extremely interesting sketch of this cartoon can be found in the '1894 sketchbook', along with an earlier idea for the window that was subsequently abandoned (see ill.). The window itself, alas, has vanished.



George Grosz, *Street Scene*, 1916, drawing. Private collection.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Vuillard to Maurice Denis, 30 May 1894, Salomon archives.

<sup>2</sup> Frèches-Thory, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 396.



V-95



## V-96.1 to V-96.5

Five Decorative Panels  
for Thadée Natanson, also  
known as *The Album*

**Common provenance:** Decoration for a small salon and antechamber in Siegfried Bing's Maison de l'Art Nouveau in 1895 – Thadée Natanson (who appears to have been the inspiration behind the project from its inception, and who certainly owned the panels around the date of opening of Bing's gallery in December) – Thadée Natanson, Paris, 1896–1908.

**Common exhibitions:** Paris, Bing, 1895–96, no. 210 – Berlin, Ausstellungshaus am Kurfürstendamm, 1906, no. 296.

**Common bibliography:** Segard 1914, p. 320 – Chastel 1946, pp. 24 (ill.), 25 (ill.), 53, 115 – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 53–54, 78, 126, 133 (ill.); and 1948c, ills. 4–5 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 77–79, 82, 88 – Bacou 1964, p. 196 – Dugdale 1965, p. 97, fig. 7 – Roger-Marx 1968, pp. 32, 34, col. pl. 4 – Mauner 1978, pp. 170, 177, 196, 261, 268 – Daniel 1984, p. 44, ills. 7–8 – Warnod 1988, pp. 35, 44 (col. ill.) – Easton 1989, pp. 117–118 – Makarius 1989, pp. 21, 24, 26 (col. ill.) – Rishel, travelling exhib. cat., United States, 1989–91, pp. 110–114, 196–198, ills. 167–168 (col. ill.) – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, pp. 122, 123 (ill.), 124–125 (col. ills.), 126 – Groom 1990, p. 153 – Forgione 1992, pp. 105–106, ills. 58–60 – Groom 1993, pp. 3, 67–90, 101, 104, 141, 145, 164, 205–206, col. fig. 114, fig. 115, col. ills. 116–118 – Groom, exhib. cat., Chicago–New York, 2001, pp. 126–131 (col. ills.).



V-96.1

## V-96.1

## Woman in a Striped Blouse

1895

Oil on canvas, 65.7 × 58.7 cm

Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1983.I.88

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 55 [*Le Corsage rayé*] (ill.) – M. Escher, 1,750 F – Georg Herbert Dietze, Frankfurt (Germany) – Wildenstein, New York, c. 1965 – Paul Mellon, Upperville (Virginia) – National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., in 1983.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibitions] – Munich, Gebäude am Königsplatz, 1911, no. 202 –



V-96.2

**Bibliography:** [see common bibliography] – Clay 1971, p. 257 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, pp. 49, 71 – Exhib. cat., Cuiseaux, 1990, p. 25 (ill.) – Cogeval 1993b, p. 58 (col. ill.).

Leipzig, Stadtgeschichtliches Museum, 1922 – Hamburg–Frankfurt–Zurich, 1964, no. 26 (ill.) – Houston–Washington D.C.–Brooklyn, 1989–90, no. 87 (col. ill.) – Zurich–Paris, 1993–94, no. 172 (col. ill.) – Chicago–New York, 2001, no. 39, p. 130 (col. ill.).

## V-96.2

## The Album

1895

Oil on canvas, 67.8 × 204.5 cm

Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection, 2000.93.2

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 51 [*L'Album*] – Théo van Rysselberghe, Paris, 2,000 F – Émile Mayrisch, Colpach (Luxembourg) – Mme Andrée Pierre-Viénot, Paris – Wildenstein, New York, c. 1970 – Walter H. Annenberg, United States – Partial gift to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1993.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibitions] – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 232 [*La Conversation*] – Hamburg–Frankfurt–Zurich, 1964, no. 88 (ill.) – United States, travelling exhib., 1989–91, p. 110 (col. ill.) – New York, 2001, no. 35, p. 126 (col. ill.).

## V-96.3

## Embroidery

1895

Oil on canvas, 177.7 × 65.6 cm

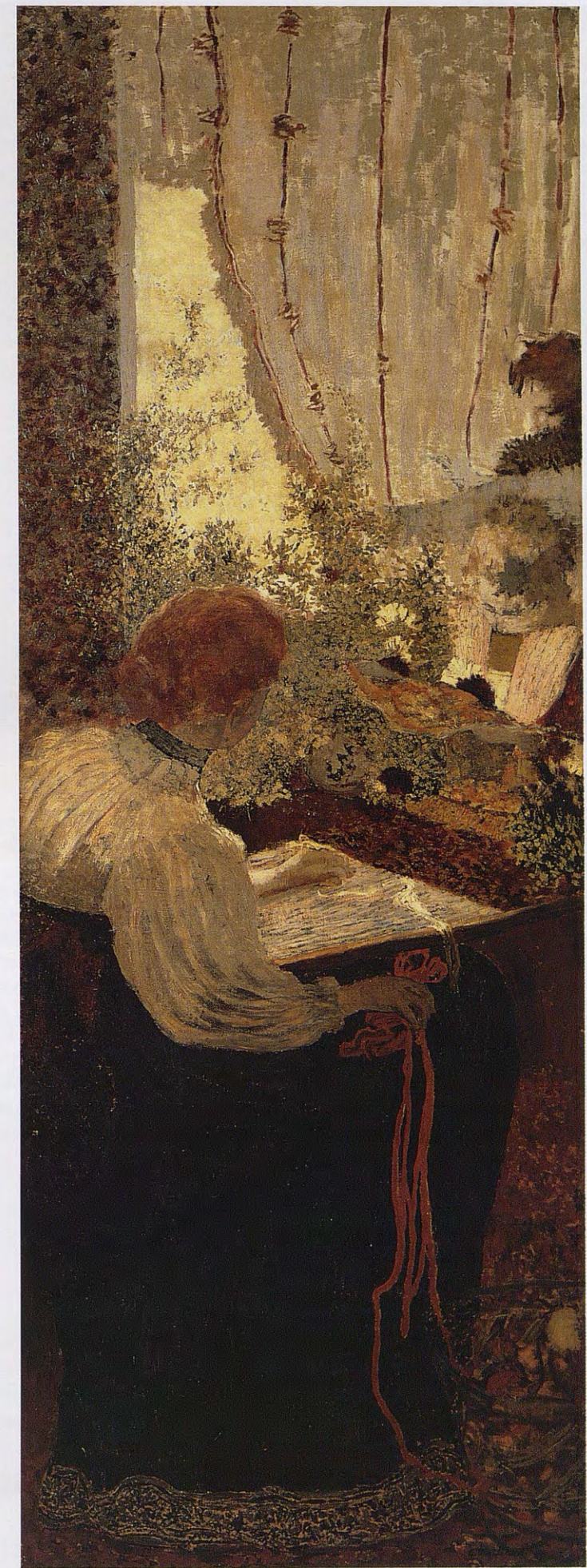
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 294.193

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 54 [*La Tapisserie*] – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 16704), 1,950 F – Jacques-Émile Blanche, Paris, 15 Feb. 1909, 3,000 F – Leicester Galleries, London – M. Lecaron, Paris – Hector Brame, Paris, 1958 – De Hauke, Paris – John Hay Whitney, New York, c. 1961; Estate of John Hay Whitney – The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1983.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibitions] – London, Tate Gallery, 1960–61, no. 63 (ill.) – New York, Wildenstein, 1961, no. 49 (ill.) – Brooklyn, 1990 (not in cat.) – Zurich–Paris, 1993–94, no. 171 (col. ill.) – Montreal, 1998, no. 182, p. 58 (col. ill.) – Chicago–New York, 2001, no. 36, p. 127 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** [see common bibliography] – Heron 1947, p. 51 (col. ill.).



V-96.3





V-96.4

## V-96.4

## The Dressing-Table

1895

Oil on canvas, 65 × 116 cm

Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*

Private collection

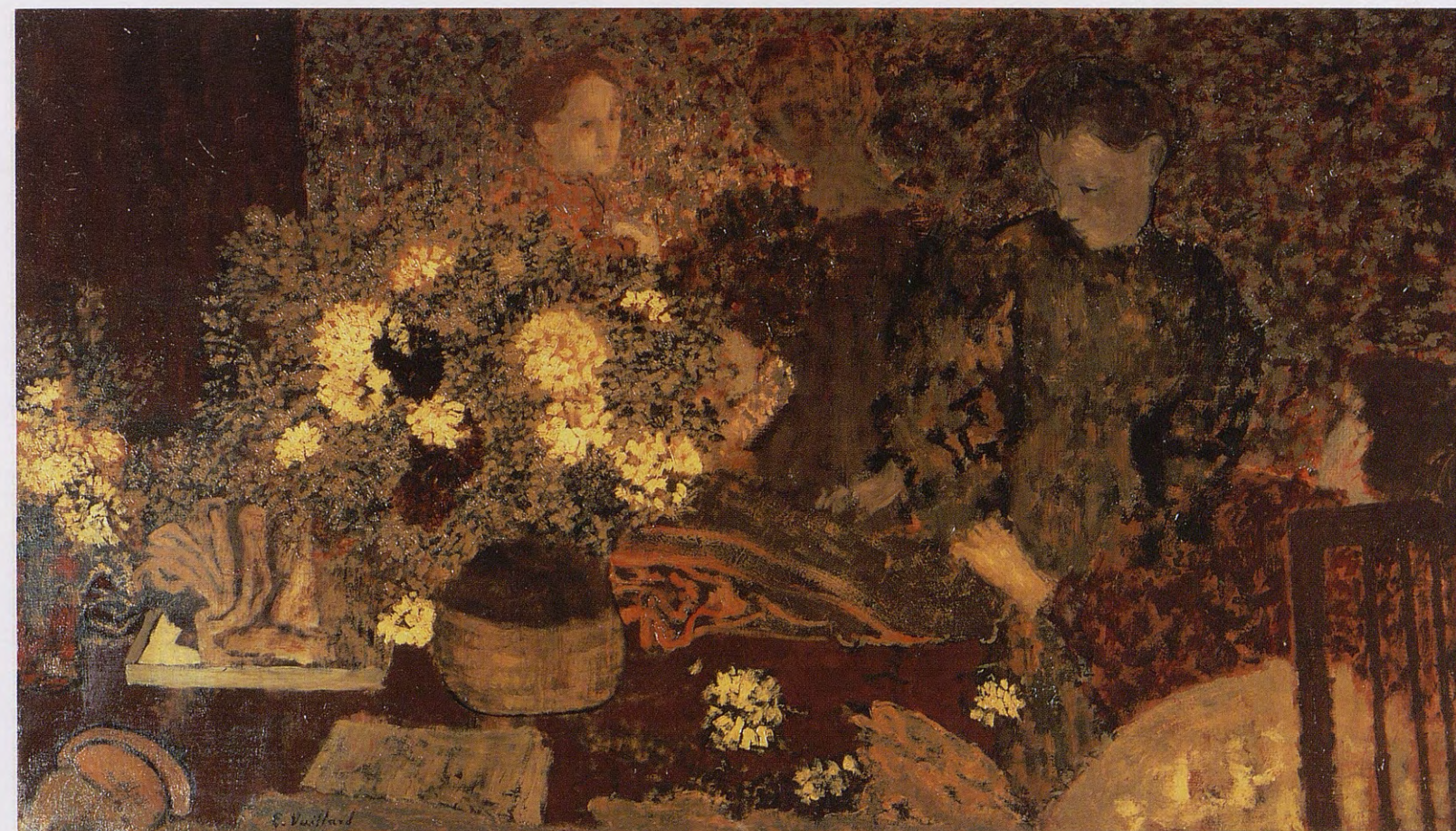
**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 53 [*La Table de toilette*] – Jos Hessel, Paris,

1,350 F – Sale, Christie's, New York, 14 Nov. 1989, lot 55 (col. ill.) – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibitions] – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1917, no. 355 – Paris, Hôtel de la Curiosité, 1922, no. 160 – Bristol, Royal West of England Academy, 1930, no. 94 – New York, Seligmann, 1930, no. 31 – Zurich, Kunsthau, May-June 1932, no. 124 [*Dans les fleurs*, 1892-93] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1933, no. 339 – London, Arthur Tooth & Sons, 1934, no. 5 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 37a [*Dans les fleurs*] – Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1939, no. 136 – Buenos Aires, Bellas

Artes, 1939, no. 202a – Montevideo, Salón Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1940, no. 165a – San Francisco, M. H. De Young Memorial Museum, 1940-41, no. 169 – Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Jan.-March 1941, no. 62 – New York, Rosenberg, Jan. 1943, no. 5 – New York, Rosenberg, 1945, no. 11 – Brooklyn, 1990 (not in cat.) – Chicago-New York, 2001, no. 38, p. 129 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** [see common bibliography] – Bernard 1930, p. 25 (ill.) – *L'Amour de l'art*, 20, no. 4, May 1939, p. 52 (ill.).



V-96.5

## V-96.5

## The Stoneware Vase

1895

Oil on canvas, 65.5 × 114.5 cm

Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*

Private collection

**Provenance:** [see common provenance] – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 52 [*Le Pot de grès*] (ill.) – Jos Hessel, Paris, 1,500

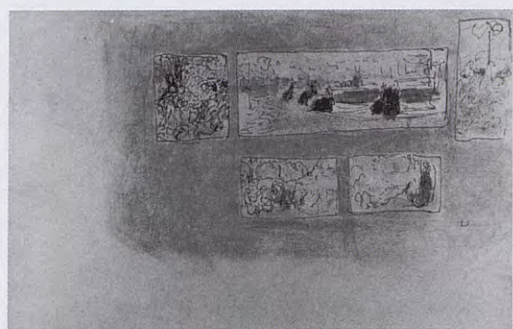
F – Private collection – Sale, Christie's, New York, 18 Nov. 1998, lot 38 (col. ill.) – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** [see common exhibitions] – Munich, Secession, 1908 – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1917, no. 354 – Paris, Hôtel de la Curiosité, 1922, no. 161 – Bristol, Royal West of England Academy, 1930, no. 95 (ill.) – New York, Seligmann, 1930, no. 30 – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1932, no. 123 [*Conversation*, 1892-93] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1933, no. 341 – London, Tooth & Sons, 1934, no. 6 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 37b [*Conversation*] – Amsterdam,

Stedelijk Museum, 1939, no. 137 – Buenos Aires, Bellas Artes, 1939, no. 202b – Montevideo, Salón Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1940, no. 165b – San Francisco, M. H. De Young Memorial Museum, 1940-41, no. 170 – Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Jan.-March 1941, no. 60 – New York, Rosenberg, Jan. 1943, no. 6 – New York, Rosenberg, 1945, no. 10 – Chicago-New York, 2001, no. 37, p. 128 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** [see common bibliography] – Bernard 1930, p. 25 (ill.) – George 1938a, p. 26 (ill.).





E. V., first idea for the Natanson Panels. *The Album*, 1894-95, pen, Indian ink and pastel on paper, 20.2 x 31 cm. Private collection.

In the 'autobiographical notes' confided to his Journal in 1908, the forty-year-old artist, looking back over his past, mentions several times that it was indeed Thadée Natanson who commissioned this set of panels.<sup>1</sup> We now know that the request of the director of *La Revue Blanche* coincided with an invitation to decorate a room in Siegfried Bing's Maison de l'Art Nouveau, inaugurated in 1895. The dimensions of these paintings are the most unusual in Vuillard's entire oeuvre, with the exception of the *Kapferer Frieze* (XI-208.1 to XI-208.7), a late work. Though their logic escapes us at present, they must have been dictated by Bing's requirements for the room leading into his rotunda. This is confirmed, if confirmation be needed, by the drawing mentioned in the notes to *The Public Gardens* (V-39.1 to V-39.9), which has exactly the same proportions, scaled down to a drawing, but with an iconography that suggests a public park: women watching over children at play around the edge of a pond. In it Vuillard shows that format need not be dictated by subject matter. Presumably, then, Bing provided the occasion for this decorative cycle, while Thadée and Misia Natanson simply acquired the finished paintings. Gloria Groom has made a particularly close study of the ensemble's installation in the Natanson's rue Saint-Florentin apartment and its subsequent removal to their country house at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne. Four of the five panels are indeed visible in Vuillard's photographs of Thadée and his guests playing billiards. The *Album* panels, which presented themselves from the outset as a high-water mark in Vuillard's art, may be viewed as an allegory of life in the Natanson home, where music, poetry, refined tastes and the art of living were com-

bined. Strictly speaking, the panels were never framed, since they were designed to blend in with the obsessive arabesques of a wallpaper inspired by the English Arts and Crafts movement. Vuillard, who was Misia's unconditional ally, must have counselled Natanson in the choice of these decorative compositions. Nor was this unusual: a number of intellectuals around this time, including the painstaking Lucien Muhlfield, favoured moveable décors.<sup>2</sup> Ornamental carvings and overdoors (paintings placed above doors) are a tradition of French interior decoration, and Vuillard was no exception among his countrymen in having a fondness for them. *The Album*, in which he once again presents women strolling among flowers, irresistibly calls to mind certain decorative works by Boucher or, better still, Fragonard. The latter's splendid *Décor des Saisons* at the Hôtel Matignon in Paris depicts women, putti and a variety of objects in overdoors that are similar in size to *Conversation* (V-39.4) and *The Dressing-Table* (V-96.4). Vuillard's five paintings hung for several months in Bing's establishment and even met with a certain critical success. It was the first time that one of the artist's decorative ensembles had been shown in public, and it was not by any means the easiest of them to appreciate. Arsène Alexandre, baffled by the excesses of Art Nouveau, wittily remarked on 'Monsieur Vuillard's discreet and harmonious panels... lit by an absurd hanging lamp around which fat flies are buzzing, illuminating us with their transparent bottoms'.<sup>3</sup> More favourably, Edmond Cousturier acknowledged that 'Monsieur Vuillard is a rare harmonist. He has a feeling for the charm of intimacy, the riddle in which every solitary being appears to dwell. He vocalizes in the minor key; his tones are neutral and muted, his combinations subtle'.<sup>4</sup> Camille Mauclair, on the other hand, who had earlier co-founded with Vuillard and Lugné-Poe the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, had begun to turn against this art whose logic he was unable to grasp: 'Monsieur Vuillard, about whom I have spoken with warmth and who is known for his exquisite little canvases in the Japanese manner, has submitted several panels which have no connection with anything, are meaningless in terms of the room's lighting and repeat, in an impasto of unsightly splotches,

a commonplace motif of women emerging from a confusion of characterless flowers'.<sup>5</sup> Groom, meanwhile, rightly compares Vuillard's decorative panels to Courbet and Degas' paintings of women 'among flowers'. She also points out that 'the association of women and nature, in particular flowers, was a conventional subject in paintings, posters and illustrations at that time. But Vuillard's young girls do not merely embellish a domestic space: they bring a feeling of sensual abundance to it'.<sup>6</sup>

The panels may have made several journeys back and forth between the rue Saint-Florentin and Villeneuve-sur-Seine. They presumably accompanied the 96 plates that Vuillard executed for Jean Schopfer, which were also displayed at the Maison de l'Art Nouveau, on furniture designed by Henry Van de Velde and surrounded by decorative panels by Paul Ranson. When Misia and Thadée separated in 1904, Thadée kept *The Album*, probably because the by-then somewhat dated decorative ensemble would have looked out of place in the opulent bourgeois home of Misia's new husband, Alfred Edwards. Four years later, *The Album* was broken up in the famous Thadée Natanson auction sale.

The ensemble constitutes the high point of Vuillard's art of illusion and dissembling – of camouflage, one might venture to say. Objects appear to float above the level surface of a table that in most of the panels is placed in the foreground. Heedless of each other's presence, the women give only a fleeting impression of their facial appearance. Everything – the objects, the flowers, the female figures – is suspended in an indefinite space. Never before has the artist made us feel so strongly that the eye has to make a definite visual effort to understand what is happening to the figures and objects in the composition. Even Claude Roger-Marx's enthusiasm is dampened by the aesthetic of these paintings. 'They have the sonority of lacquer ware', he remarks; 'chestnut browns, warm reds, vermilions and plum purples harmonize with black'. At the same time, his criticisms of Vuillard serve to bring out the underlying qualities of these mysteriously appealing paintings: 'These ghosts, whom we nevertheless regard as living beings in their striped or spotted

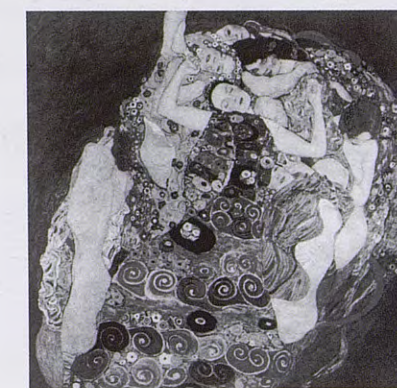
blouses, these bourgeois little sisters absorbed in darning and the cut of their garments – as the presence here and there of a sewing box or an unfolded piece of material suggests – are still wholly immersed in Symbolism: it is impossible to identify the species of these bouquets – half-chrysanthemums, half-hydrangeas – that spangle space with their greenery or whiteness and vie with other blossoms – those on the curtains – intercepting the figures as though to preserve their ghostly appearance... The enchantment comes from these tentative gestures, these embryonic states of mind, all these correspondences invented between the objects, the faces and their surroundings.' The dreamlike manner in which these figures emerge from a sort of ceaselessly shifting chaos, brought about by the precarious equilibrium between objects and beings, the way in which they appear to move simultaneously both into and out of space, may have been confirmed for Vuillard by the art of Odilon Redon, who had had a large show at the Galerie Durand-Ruel the previous year (1894) and had been praised to the skies by Thadée Natanson in an article in *La Revue Blanche*: 'The painter, like the lithographer, has established himself as a Prince of Dreams... How is it possible for vagueness, to which dreams owe the better part of their charm, to confine itself within the inevitable limits of a visual expression? It can do so only on the condition, satisfied here, that, however far the dream might lead the artist into limbo or the contemplation of a legend, it will always present him with forms whose substance alone – whether colours or lines or their composition – gives meaning'.<sup>8</sup> Vuillard's ambition in *The Album* is precisely to clothe the fascination of dreams in particular forms. Moreover, his unqualified admiration for Odilon Redon was to remain undiminished as he grew old, as is shown by such late decorations as *The Clos Cézanne Garden at Vaucresson* (XI-52) and the *Kapferer Frieze* (XI-208.1 to XI-208.7), two marked tributes to the old Symbolist master.

In *The Album*, as Claude Roger-Marx has pointed out, Vuillard shows affinities with Maurice Denis, not least in the dimensions of the work, which distinctly recall the *Panels for a Young Girl's Room*<sup>9</sup> (see III-31, note

1) exhibited by Bing at the Maison de l'Art Nouveau concurrently with Vuillard's panels. But Vuillard's universe is a great deal more personal than Denis'. Only a year earlier, in his Journal, he had raised the question of the decorative and ornamental use of flowers in painting: 'The purplish and white chrysanthemums on the table at noon. A motif at once pleasing and ornamental in a serious way. Desk decoration. Flowers, after all, are a crude, simple ornament. I don't mean to say that I despise them, but it requires no effort to capture their appearance, shapes and colours, they are properly a truly natural ornament. Their ornamental significance is simple, primitive, has sufficient interest thanks to the quality of their shapes and colours; quite the contrary, painting, which also consists of shapes and colours, requires a more complex imaginative effort from the mind contemplating it'.<sup>10</sup> This series of five disparate panels is evidence of Vuillard's skill at deploying a '*décor interminable*', being a dappled frieze, so to speak, of women arranging flowers, embroidering and musing as they watch time pass. In the fine, tall panel *Embroidery*, embroidering becomes an allegory of the act of creation itself. The pigment that coats the canvas and stitches together the planes of the painting gradually reveals another composition in the process of being elaborated, as a red ribbon unwinds from the young girl's right hand – an obvious parallel to the canvas in progress, a metaphorical flow of substance, a loss that is a vital part of the creative labour.

Imperceptibly, Vuillard's universe has changed, shifting from a sensibility close to that of Claude Debussy's *Damoiselle élue*, implicit in such compositions as *Women in the Garden* (III-31) to an aesthetic similar to that of *Les Sirènes* and the symphonic suite *Nocturnes*, dominated by infinite arabesques and the taste for unbroken melodic lines that overran the world of music after Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. The movements of the figures in *The Album* are vague and irresolute. Distance and proximity seem unconnected in space. These panels, which are unlike anything previously achieved in decorative art, almost make one's head spin. The space Vuillard presents to our view is one in which we have lost our footing; we are suspended in an indetermi-

nate space made plausible by a sort of *Klangfarbenmelodie*<sup>11</sup> in which the opening chord of *Tristan* combines with an opium-induced reverie, as it were. In this sense, Vuillard's panels can be said to be '*durchkomponiert*'; that is to say, their logic arises from the very assembling and disassembling of the composition. *The Album* is astonishingly similar to Gustav Klimt's more modernist and Expressionist manner after 1910.



Gustav Klimt, *The Young Girl*, 1912-13, oil on canvas. Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague.

A comparison with *The Young Girl* (1913) (see ill.) in the Prague Gallery would be most interesting. Klimt's young women appear to have emerged from some primeval water, its perpetual motion suggested by the folds of the fabrics in which their bodies are swathed. Here, too, we get an impression of a 'collective embryo'<sup>12</sup> breaking up even as it is being formed. *The Album* perfectly expresses the 'total artwork' (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) that Vuillard always secretly hoped to achieve.

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal. I.2, fol.13v and 78r.

<sup>2</sup> Muhlfield, 1893, p. 460.

<sup>3</sup> Arsène Alexandre, 'L'Art nouveau', *Le Figaro*, 28 Dec. 1895, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> E. Cousturier, 'Galeries S. Bing. Le mobilier', *La Revue Blanche* 10, no. 63, 15 Jan. 1896, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> Camille Mauclair, 'Choses d'art', *Mercur de France* 17, no. 74, Feb. 1896, pp. 267-268.

<sup>6</sup> Groom 1993, p. 78; and Groom 2001, p. 128.

<sup>7</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> Thadée Natanson, 'Exposition Odilon Redon', *La Revue Blanche*, May 1894, pp. 470-471.

<sup>9</sup> Maurice Denis, *Studies for a Young Girl's Room*, 1895-1900, commissioned by Siegfried Bing for the inaugural exhibition of his Maison de l'Art Nouveau on the theme of 'the Love and Life of a Woman'. Three of these panels belong to the Musée Départemental Maurice Denis, in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, two to a private collection.

<sup>10</sup> E. V., Journal, 26 October 1894, I.2, fol. 51 v.

<sup>11</sup> Arnold Schönberg's phrase meaning 'Colour and Sound Melody'.

<sup>12</sup> Werner Hoffmann, *Gustav Klimt und die Wiener Jahrhundertwende*, Salzburg, 1970 p. 32.



## V-97.1 to V-97.4

**Interior with Figures**, also known as the *Vaquez Panels* (four decorative panels)

1896

Distemper on canvas

Musée du Petit Palais, Paris

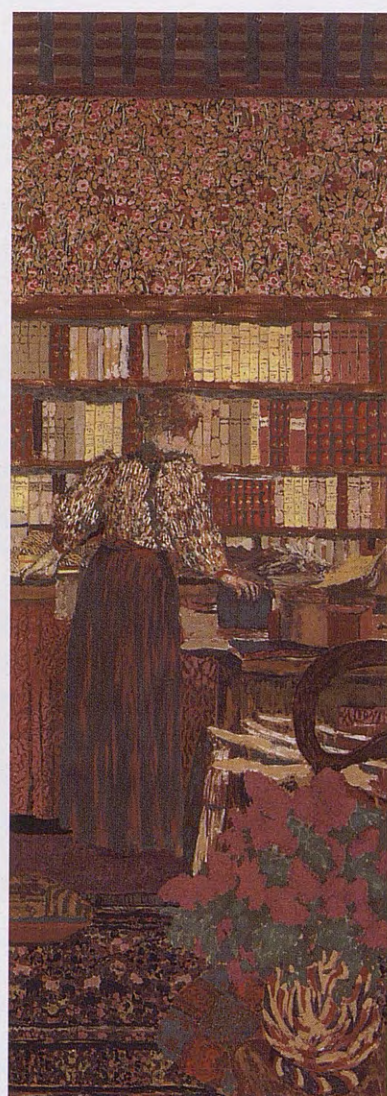
**Common provenance:** Commissioned by Dr Henri Vaquez to decorate his library at 27 rue du Général-Foy, 75008 Paris in 1896, 1,000 F – Vaquez bequest to the Musée du Petit Palais, Paris, 1936.

**Common exhibitions:** Paris, Grand Palais, 1905, nos. 1597-1600 – Paris, Petit Palais, 1937, room 15, no. 18 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 45 [*Personnages dans des intérieurs*] – Paris, Charpentier, May-Sept. 1946, no. 98 – Switzerland, travelling exhib., 1947, no. 110 – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1947, no. 307 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, nos. 233-236 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, nos. 177 [*Jeune homme travaillant dans une bibliothèque*], no. 178 [*Jeune femme lisant dans une bibliothèque*] – Rotterdam-Paris, Boijmans Van Beuningen, 1952-53, nos. 141-144 – Paris, Petit Palais, 1953, nos. 505-508 – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, nos. 60-63 (ill.) – Brussels, Musées Royaux, 1975, nos. 29-32 (ill.) – Paris, Grand Palais, 2000, p. 111 (ill.).

**Common bibliography:** Natanson 1896, p. 518 – *L'Art et les Artistes*, 2 Oct. 1905-March 1906, p. 50 (ill.) – Segard 1914, pp. 265 (ill.), 266-274, 272 (ill.), 320 – Bazin 1933, p. 92, fig. 106 – La Tourette 1936 (ill.) – Escholier 1937, pp. 21 (ill.), 22 – Huyghe 1939, pp. 41-42, pl. 15 – Salomon 1945, pp. 39 (ill.), 40 – Chastel 1946, pp. 32-33 (ill.), 35 (ill.), 53-54, 58, 115 – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 52-54, 124-126, 134-136 (ill.), 184; and 1948c, pp. 15-16, pl. 11-14 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 76-79, 93-94, 97, 104 – Salomon 1953, p. 30 – Chastel 1954, p. 43 (ill.) – Ritchie 1954, pp. 22, 64-65 (ill.) – Schweicher 1955, pp. 23-24, figs. 10-13 – Chassé 1957, p. 5 (ill.) – Salomon 1961, pp. 48-50 (ills.), 51 – Schweicher 1963, pp. 19 (ill.), 20 – Bacou 1964, p. 196 – Dugdale 1965, pp. 97, 100 (ill.), fig. 9 – Russoli 1966, col. pl. 5, 6-7 – Barilli 1967c, pp. 128-132 (col. ills.) – Barilli 1967e, p. 97, col. pl. 48-50 – Dugdale 1967a, p. 5, col. pl. 6-7 – Roger-Marx 1968, pp. 32, 34-40 – Salomon 1968, pp. 66-68 (ills.), 69 – *Time*, 23 August 1968, p. 57 (col. ill.) – Clay 1971, p. 264 (col. ill.) – Preston 1971, p. 38 – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, pp. 40-41 (ill.), 52, 66-67, 225 – Dunstan 1973, p. 46 – Russoli and Martini 1973, col. pls. 5, 6-7 – Perucchi-Petri 1976, pp. 147-149, fig. 95 – Mauner 1978, p. 196 – Frèches-Thory 1979, p. 310 – Gold and Fizdale 1980, p. 72 (ill.) – Georges 1982, pp. 69, 103-109 – Laffon 1982, nos. 822-825 (ill.) – Cogeval 1984, no. 63 (ill.), p. 113 (col. ill.) – Daniel 1984, pp. 31-38, fig. 1 – Cogeval 1986, p. 96 (col. ill.) – Wilson-Bureau 1986, pp. 37, 44, no. 5 – Kelder 1986, p. 213, col. ills. 221-222 – Thomson 1988, pp. 49, 72-73, pls. 42-



V-97.1



V-97.2

## V-97.2

**Choosing a Book**

1896

Distemper on canvas, 212 x 77 cm

Signed and dated, lower left:

*Edouard Vuillard 96*

Musée du Petit Palais, Paris,

Inv. PPP02441

## V-97.3

**Intimité**

1896

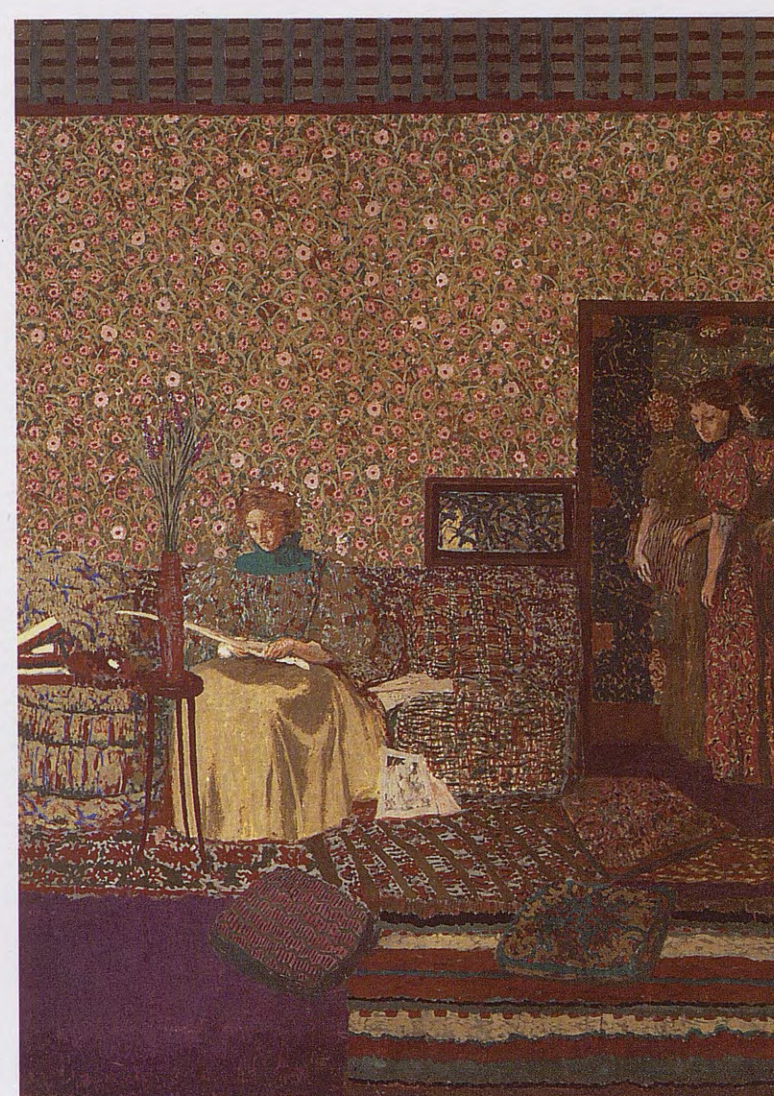
Distemper on canvas, 212.5 x 154.5 cm

Signed and dated, lower right:

*Edouard Vuillard 96*

Musée du Petit Palais, Paris,

Inv. PPP02439



V-97.3

## V-97.4

**Music**

1896

Distemper on canvas, 212.5 x 154 cm

Signed and dated, lower left:

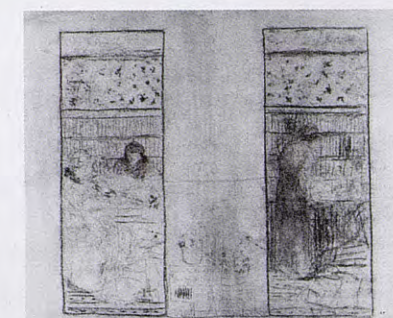
*Edouard Vuillard 96*

Musée du Petit Palais, Paris,

Inv. PPP02440



V-97.4



E. V., preparatory sketch for the *Vaquez Panels*, 1896, 50 x 72.5 cm. Private collection.

This is one of Vuillard's most admired decorative cycles and was commissioned in 1896 by the famous cardiologist Henri Vaquez (1860-1936) for the library of his residence at 27 rue du Général-Foy. The painter's 'autobiographical notes' confirm that the panels were executed in August 1896. To this end, Vuillard rented a studio at 7 rue Drouot. He was paid a thousand francs for the work, in two instalments. A preparatory drawing in the Salomon archives (see ill.) shows that from the very outset Vuillard wanted *Working* to go on

the left of *Choosing a Book*; both panels, moreover, were designed to be seen in the natural light of Dr. Vaquez's library.

The critical response to this decorative cycle has always been enthusiastic. As with so many of Vuillard's works, it was Thadée Natanson who was the first to speak of it: 'Another ensemble of varicoloured decorative panels of women and flowers could be seen at L'Art Nouveau. This one, which contains both, surpasses them: a silent symphony of harmonious

and previously unseen relationships that become more and more resonant the longer one looks at them, flashes of melody, attitudes skillfully linked together and composed from those his kindly nature captures and his loving memory has retained. It is a masterly profusion of those harmonious, coloured splendours in which a gentle soul garbs itself.<sup>1</sup> From the very outset, the affinities with tapestry-work were remarked by critics like Charles Morice 'for their overall harmony, their concordance with the objects' in a modern interior.<sup>2</sup> It fell to Jacques Salomon to put forward the more subtle analogy of a mirror (i.e. the distance induced by their reflection in a mirror would render the figures in the room proportionally smaller). 'His subjects are inspired this time round by the art-lover's own apartment, reflecting like mysterious mirrors its transposed motifs.'<sup>3</sup> Even if we accept the hypothesis of a reflected image, it would have been quite a challenge



to represent the elements of an imaginary library within a real library. Is there not a contradiction between the mimetic powers of mirrors, which amount to so many 'openings' within a room, and a tapestry, which tends, on the contrary, to seal space on all sides? Moreover, the first thing we notice about Vuillard's cycle is that the picture-space is hermetically sealed. The inlaid wooden ceiling, which runs from one panel to another, unifies the room. If one visually combines the exaggerated slope of the floor – covered with rugs the horizontal stripes of which accentuate the effect of a steeply inclined surface – with the hypnotic presence of the 'mille-fleurs' wallpaper, one seems to be looking at a sort of gigantic doll's house the furnishings of which have been pulled apart prior to assembly. Once the interior has been flattened in this way, the figures are set down, as it were, onto the decorative canvas, pinned like butterflies onto this entomologist's tray and woven into the very fabric of the canvas, like figures in a tapestry. Background and figures are one, and there is no sense of recession. It is important to stress here the hothouse atmosphere of these paintings that paved the way for modern art – not so much the modern art represented by Matisse or Braque in their Fauve period, as the 'all-over' American school embodied by Sam Francis and Mark Rothko after 1945. Let us also acknowledge that these *Vaquez Panels* are a forerunner of Matisse's *Interior with Aubergines*, with its overlapping



Henri Matisse, *Interior with Aubergines*, 1911, oil on canvas. Musée de Grenoble, Grenoble.

of fabrics and wallpaper. They are Vuillard's boldest experiment in the 'collage' of foreshortened planes.

It is entertaining to recall that, when this decorative composition was shown in the 'cage aux Fauves' at the 1905 Salon d'Automne, André Gide, fiercely hostile to the Fauves, by way of reaction showered fulsome praise on Vuillard's panels, which by this time were ten

years old. 'I come back to the panels of Monsieur Vuillard. I do not know what is most to be admired here. Perhaps Monsieur Vuillard himself. He speaks intimately of himself... Yes, I sense in him, in spite of his success, the charm of restlessness and doubt. Not once does he set down a colour without excusing it by a subtle and precious highlight. Too delicate to assert, he insinuates – in these two large "landscapes with figures", it is an indefinable carmine violet – but with such sureness [of touch] that, while still surprising, this carmine somehow seems necessary. There is no attempt to dazzle, only a constant need for harmony; through an understanding of relations at once intuitive and skilful, each colour unexpectedly elucidates its neighbour, obtaining its consent, and vice versa.'<sup>4</sup> At the Salon of 1905, the modern tradition represented by Vuillard seems to have run out of steam. The symbolism of suggestion, of a certain *je-ne-sais-quoi*, had been exhausted – nor did Gide's eulogy help matters.<sup>5</sup> Vuillard's highly subdued colour combinations, on the other hand, along with the incredible daring of his collage-like planes, somehow manage to preserve their Symbolist fragrance (puppet-like women trapped in space, the silent explosion of the chrysanthemums, lit from below as though by footlights), while looking fearlessly ahead to Fauvist art (black striations on dull garnet-red) and collage (the green collar of the seated woman in *Intimité*). The essentially vertical character of the total picture space, with its bands of décors stitched together and read from the top down, forces the painter to resort to tricks of light to have us believe in a possible depth of field: on the chintz fabrics in the foreground of *Music*, the silk square with a violet border takes on a phosphorescent glow; the bunch of lilacs in *The Library* is so close to our line of vision as to be blurred; in *Intimité*, the mirror placed on its side on the back of the sofa reflects the image of a plant that is outside the picture frame, while the two women who linger in the doorway seem to be figures from a panel within the panel, as it were. Within this jubilant yet melancholy space, Vuillard's 'set clauses' – the ruff of the girl playing the piano (a pool of pink on her striped dress) or the grey highlights on the dark, lacquered piano (a 'glossy'

note in an otherwise 'fleecey' interior) – take on a conclusive, almost epoch-making stability. Vuillard has moved from a *poetics* of chance to its virtuoso and supreme *organization*. These four panels are of central importance in the painter's work, for they bring together several of his key themes and convictions: the self-effacing heroism of modern life, the all-pervading presence of femininity and the primacy of mind, symbolized by the act of reading. Nevertheless, if we take up the analogy of the mirror again and bear in mind that, in the painting of the Nabis, it performs the same role as French windows do in the art of Matisse, the reflections rendered here are clearly not illusionistic and any strict verisimilitude stops there (one does not usually put a piano in a library). Instead, Vuillard may be said to conjure up an atmosphere, a climate, what the English would call a mood – of confinement, of dull, resonating sound. The idea of happiness is seen through a muslin veil, as it were, embodying the impalpable distance separating us from that world. 'There is, in each panel of the Vaquez decorations, a sort of motif or common decorative denominator, a pattern of dots, stripes or little balls the effect of which is repeated and made more involved throughout the entire scene, with a monotonousness that jars on the nerves before subduing them, in the way that music sometimes does. These panels have often been compared to a tapestry. Nothing could be more apt. The texture is that of well-carded cloth. The composure of the matt, glue-based distemper soaks up the soft tints.'<sup>6</sup> Yet what thunders through these compositions, their tiny structures clustered together in silence, is the inspiration born of genius. No painter comes even remotely close to Vuillard in this respect, and the *Vaquez Panels* may be ranked among the very great works of late-nineteenth-century painting.

<sup>1</sup> Natanson 1896, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Morice, *Mercur de France* 58, no. 203, 1 Dec. 1905, p. 385.

<sup>3</sup> Salomon 1945, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> André Gide, 'Promenade au Salon d'automne', *GBA* 34, no. 582, 1 Dec. 1905, pp. 479–481.

<sup>5</sup> Stravinsky said that he only had to read what Gide wrote on Schubert to realize that he knew nothing about music. This sarcastic comment can also be extended to his understanding of painting.

<sup>6</sup> Chastel 1946, p. 54.



V-98

## V-98

### The Lecturer or The Guide

c. 1897

Oil on cardboard, 26 × 39 cm

Signed, lower right: *ev*

Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Ambroise Vollard, Paris (stock no. 3813), c. 1899, 150 F – Étienne Bignou, Paris – A. Nussbaumer, Basle (Switzerland) – Hans Löw, Oberaach (Switzerland) – Galerie Georges Moos, Geneva – Léon A. Mnuchin, New York, 1953 – Mrs. Harriet Weinert Goodstein, New York, c. 1972 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 12 May 1994, lot 143 (col. ill.) – Galerie Schmit, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 83 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 102, p. 60 (ill.) [*The Art-Talk*, 1898].

**Bibliography:** *Galerie und Sammler*, Jan.-Feb. 1942, p. 13 – Preston 1971, p. 26, fig. 30 – Daniel 1984, p. 189, fig. 46.

**Description:** *The scene is probably set in a gallery, since the man on the left, who is wearing a hat, is sitting beneath a picture frame, holding forth to three ladies in a row, who seem to be listening very attentively to what he has to say.* (JS)

The man may be a museum guide, as was suggested in the 1954 Cleveland catalogue, or, alternatively, a visitor to a salon, explaining the paintings to a makeshift audience. The large gilt frames behind the figures, along with the bench seats on which they are sitting, are distinctly reminiscent of the kind of furnishings found in the Louvre, for example, or in one of the annual Salons. At least two pencil sketches for this painting exist. One presents the same composition touched up in places with highlights of colour (see ill.); the other presents a broader view and

adds at least two visitors to the group seated on the bench (see ill.). On the floor of the room, Vuillard has scribbled what appears to be a group of flowers or a lawn, in all likelihood one of the decorative flower-beds found in practically all Salons and Universal Exhibitions in the nineteenth century. The scene depicted in this little canvas is particularly droll; we can almost hear the impassioned words of the connoisseur, almost feel the thrill of joy running through the female audience which hangs on his every word.



E. V., preparatory drawing for *The Lecturer*, c. 1897, graphite on paper, 13.7 × 10.9 cm. Private collection.





V-99

### V-99 The Pleasure Party

c. 1898-99  
Glue-based distemper on cardboard,  
74.5 × 78 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Porche Museum, Hakone Sengokuhara,  
Hakone (Japan)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris – Walter Hadorn, Berne – Galerie Odermatt-Cazeau, Paris – Makuko Partners in Art, Tokyo – Porche Museum, Hakone.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Maratier, 1943, no. 75 – La Chaix-de-Fonds, Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 39 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 15 [*Au café*] – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 182 [*La Partie fine*] and 1953, no. 142 – Berne, Kunstmuseum, 1959, no. 93 – Geneva, Krugier, 1969, no. 90 (ill.) – Berne, Kunstmuseum, 1977, no. 133 (col. ill.) – Japan, travelling exhib., 1990-91, no. XVII-1 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 40 (col. ill.) [*Au café*, 1898], and 1954, p. 29 (col. ill.) – Kun-

stkalender Berner Allgemeine, Berner Leben 30, Dec. 1978 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 77 – Clay 1984, p. 92 (col. ill.) – Daniel 1984, pp. 129, 134, fig. 47 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 130-131, 136, fig. 40 – Bernier 1991, p. 69 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A fat man wearing beige-coloured clothes, with red highlights on his nose and ear, seen in profile. Seated next to him is a young lady in black, wearing a large hat ornamented with something grey and resting an arm on the table. A mauve scarf runs down the front of her bust and the lighting gives a pearly shine to her face, that is somewhere between bright yellow and warm grey. On the right is a bearded man in a black collar, seen in three-quarters profile. The emerald green of the two bottles insinuates itself between the blacks, and the white tablecloth is enriched with glints of green. The arm resting on a dark armchair at bottom right seems to belong to a fourth figure facing away from the group and is cropped by the frame. The background of the room is treated in brown with green and red motifs that echo the flesh tones and the colouring of the bottles. (AC)

This painting irresistibly calls to mind Vallotton in one of his more sober but caustic compositions, such as *At the Café* (see ill.). The treatment of the figures is deliberately exaggerated, particularly that of the stout,



Félix Vallotton, *At the Café*, 1909, oil on canvas. Private collection.

ruddy-faced fellow on the left. Unlike those of *The Game of Cards* (VI-111), the characters here cannot be identified with anyone known to have formed part of the artist's entourage. Behind them, we can make out what look like posters – probably advertisements for a barber or a hairdresser. This *Pleasure Party* has none of that air of mystery so typical of the Nabi period; it might almost be an illustration for a magazine, enlivened by a sense of caricature for which, judging by *The Office* (VI-110) and *The Lecturer* (V-98), Vuillard had a particularly sharp eye at the turn of the century.



V-100

### V-100 The Small Restaurant

c. 1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 28 × 23 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas (Texas),  
The Wendy and Emery Reves Collection,  
1985.R.85

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alfred Daber, Paris – Georges Renand, Paris, 1955 – Jacques Blot, 1955 – Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 36 [*'Le Petit Restaurant.' Plusieurs personnages attablés dans une pièce aux murs jaunes, c. 1894*] – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 53; and 1946b, p. 70 (ill.) – Mercanton 1949, col. pl. 5.

**Description:** A line of brown tables with light-coloured tops and figures seated at them. To the left is a woman seen from behind, wearing a plaid blouse; to the right, a child in blue, with a blurred red object next to him. Near the bottom edge, a small dog can be seen next to some empty chairs. The wall in the background is ochre-coloured and rather brightly lit. (AC)



V-101

### V-101 Young Woman Leaning on a Billiard-Table in a Café

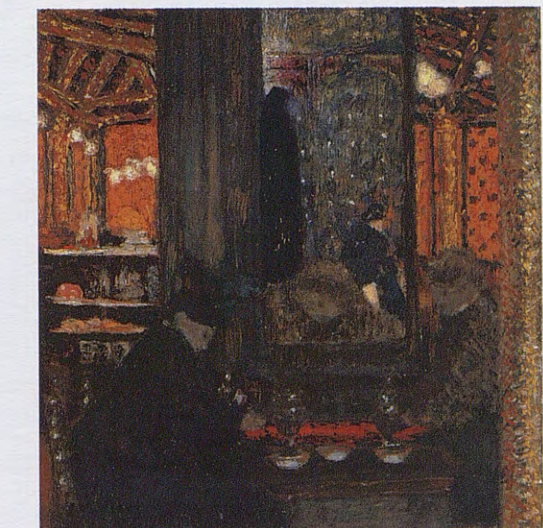
c. 1897-99  
Oil on unprepared cardboard,  
26.5 × 20 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, April 1944 – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 19 March 1983, lot 67 (ill.) – Galerie Bellier, Paris, and Galerie Berès, Paris – William Acquavella, New York – Mike Nichols, United States – Private collection, United States.

**Description:** A woman leaning an elbow on the corner of a billiard-table. The top of the table is yellow under the light of a green lamp. To the right, the bust of a second woman can be seen. (AC)

### V-102 The Café

c. 1897-99  
Oil on cardboard mounted on cradled panel, 28.5 × 27 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*  
The Cleveland Museum of Art,  
Cleveland (Ohio), 1958.57



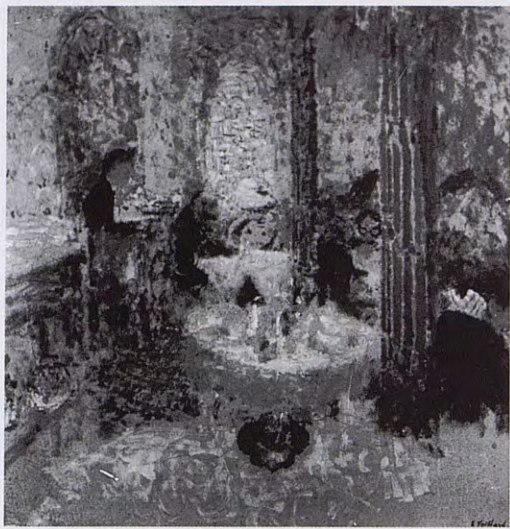
V-102

**Provenance:** Ambroise Vollard, Paris – André Weil, Paris – Jacques Seligmann, New York – Theodore Schempp, Brodhead (Wisconsin) – Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., 1943 – Leonard C. Hanna Jr. bequest to the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, 1958.

**Exhibitions:** New York, 1948, no. 10 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 101 (ill.).

**Description:** Two women on either side of a table upon which drinks have been set. To the left is a sideboard, and, in the centre, a mirror in which some figures and the silhouette of a boy are reflected. (JS)





V-103

## V-103

## At a Restaurant

c. 1897-99

Oil on unprepared cardboard,  
47 × 47 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris – O'Hana, London – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 18 Nov. 1961, lot 167 (ill.), bought in – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 9 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 38 – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 107, p. 27 (ill.).



V-104

**Bibliography:** *The Connoisseur* 148, no. 597, Nov. 1961, p. 1 (ill.).

**Description:** Black and brown figures seated at table in a room with green and red-striped columns. Aligned with the window in the background are three white and pink tables seen in perspective, the first of which has a blue and green object on it. The woman in the couple sitting next to the window is wearing a large yellow hat and holding a lorgnette. To the left is a sideboard. Red and blue rug. (AC)

## V-104

## At the Café-Concert

c. 1898

Watercolour and gouache on paper,  
20.3 × 13.9 cm

Stamp 4, lower right

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département  
des Arts Graphiques, R.F. 36821

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Claude Roger-Marx, Paris; Mme René Asselain (née Roger-Marx) – Asselain gift to the Cabinet des Dessins, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1978; Département des Arts Graphiques, Musée du Louvre.

**Exhibitions:** Asnières, Centre Administratif, 1966, no. 8 (cover ill.) – Paris, Louvre, 1980-81, no. 49 (ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona, 1990-91, no. 56, p. 29 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Thomson 1988, pl. 28 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 54 (col. ill.).

**Description:** In the foreground, a woman in a pink and grey dress and white scarf is seen in profile, lean-

ing her elbow on a marble table. Her face and ear are a uniform grey and combine with her hair to form an exaggerated arabesque beneath her large black hat. In the lamp-light illuminating the café some black silhouettes can be glimpsed among the the splashes of purple. (JS)

We see in this painting Vuillard's new predilection for compound colours such as pale pink and matte silver, which turns up after 1900 in *Garden Scene* (VII-106). Vuillard once again presents us with a picture of night-life (the painting was at one time known as *The Moulin Rouge*), only this time rendered in the more seraphic manner of Maurice Denis.

## V-105

## Café Orchestra

1898

Glue-based distemper on paper,  
41 × 45 cmSigned, lower right: *E Vuillard*

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 61 [*Orchestre de café*] – Jacques Doucet, Paris, 620 F – Galerie Georges Moos, Geneva – Dr. Albert Spillmann, Aesch (Switzerland) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 182 [*Le Café-Concert*].



V-105

## V-106

## The Patisserie

1898

Study for a lithograph (R-M 41)

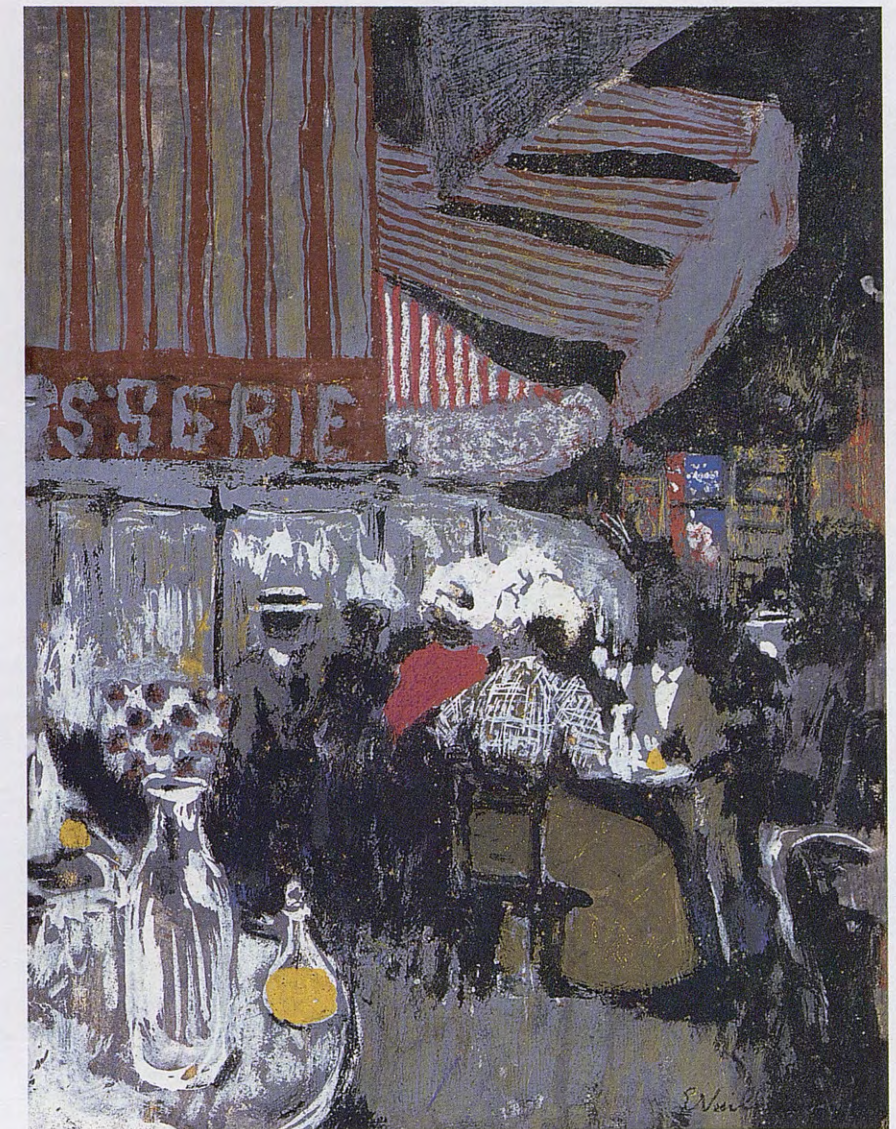
Glue-based distemper on paper, mounted  
on cardboard, 35 × 26.5 cmSigned, lower right: *E Vuillard*

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Claude Roger-Marx, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 15 May 1985, lot 158 (col. ill.) – Private collection, New York.

**Exhibition:** New York, Acquavella, 1986, no. 6.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 38 (ill.) – Warnod 1988, p. 57 (col. ill.).



V-106

## V-107

## Café Terrace

c. 1898

Glue-based distemper on paper, mounted  
on cardboard, 34.5 × 38.5 cmSigned, lower right: *E. Vuillard*

Private collection

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 58 [*Terrasse de café*] – Maurice Denis, Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France), for 370 F; Bernadette Denis, Saint-Germain-en-Laye – Galerie Berès, Paris, 1989 – Jan Krugier, Geneva – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 31 [*Café au bois de Boulogne*, c. 1893] – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 170 [*Le Café*] – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 192 [*Café au bois de Boulogne*, c. 1893] – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 20 (ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 23 – Paris, Charpentier, 1962, no. 110 – Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Hôtel de Ville, 1967, no. 68 – Geneva, Krugier, 1969, no. 84 (ill.) – New York, Loeb and Krugier, 1969, no. 86 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1970 (not in cat.) – Bremen-Zurich, 1971-72, no. 211 – Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, 1972, no. 210 – Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 106 (col. ill.) – Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 18, p. 90 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 53, 187 – Clay 1971, p. 199 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 46 – Kelder 1986, p. 207, col. fig. 214 – Legrand 1986 – Bernier 1991, p. 185 (col. ill.).



V-107





V-108

## V-108

## Waiter in a Café in the Bois de Boulogne

c. 1898

Glue-based distemper on cardboard,  
47.3 x 47.3 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo (New York), 1939 – Exchanged for VII-138 with Matignon Art Galleries, New York, Nov. 1943 – André Weil, New York – Sam Salz, New York – Mrs. John Barry Ryan, New York, 1944 – Ryan sale, Sotheby's, New York, 9 May 1995, lot 57 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Bibliography:** *Albright Art Gallery* 8, no. 1, Oct. 1939, p. 2.

The three figures in the background are the same as those in *Café Terrace* (V-107). The



E. V., preparatory drawing for *Waiter in a Café in the Bois de Boulogne*, c. 1895-97, graphite on paper, 10.2 x 12.5 cm. Private collection.

woman seen full-face in the large hat decorated with red flowers, the woman seen in profile in the red-ribboned straw hat and the man seen from behind are all clearly recognizable. The awning of the bar is the same shade of grey. The colours, on the other hand, are much brighter and more distinct, and the waiter, busy taking the order, fills most of the foreground, as Vuillard had already intended he should in a preparatory drawing (see ill.).

## V-109

## The Blue Vase

c. 1895-98

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
panel, 24.8 x 20.3 cm

Stamp 1, upper left

Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Roland, Browse & Delbanco, London – Dr Robert C. Levy, Chicago (Illinois), 1 August 1956 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 4 Nov. 1993, lot 252 (col. ill.), bought in – Private collection.

**Description:** A blue flower-bowl spangled with reflections stands on a pale-blue balustrade against a background of foliage suggesting a park. To the right can be seen the violet-coloured sleeve and light-coloured cuff of a figure otherwise cropped by the edge of the painting. (AC)

A blue barbotine flower-bowl is placed on the balustrade of a terrace. Perhaps we are looking at the upper floor of an open-air café-concert: some figures are dimly discernible

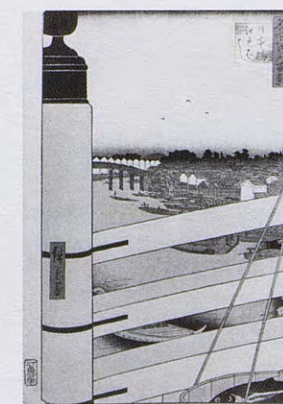


E. V., preparatory drawing for *The Blue Vase*, c. 1895-97, graphite on paper, 13.8 x 10.9 cm. Private collection.



V-109

below, and, in the foreground, at bottom right, the arm of a man cropped by the edge of the painting. The same figure, we should note, is already present in the preparatory drawing (see ill.); more importantly, the drawing gives us a clearer glimpse of a curtain behind the vase and customers in the downstairs room. The picture has a photographic air about it, though few of Vuillard's 'snapshots' present protagonists in the foreground cropped by the edge of the frame. A



Andō Hiroshige, *The Bridges of Nihonbashi and Edobashi*, print, 37.3 x 25.2 cm. Private collection.

more helpful comparison would be with certain Japanese prints owned by Vuillard, in particular Andō Hiroshige's *The Bridges of Nihonbashi and Edobashi* (see ill.), in which the foreground is occupied by the handrails of a bridge and a stanchion, a bucket containing a carp is cropped by the bottom right edge of the composition, and below and beyond the railing a landscape unfolds. The similarity in the visual structuring of the two works is particularly striking.



## V-110

## Café in the Bois de Boulogne, at Night (Jardin de l'Alcazar)

c. 1898

Glue-based distemper on paper, mounted on cardboard, 48.5 × 43.5 cm

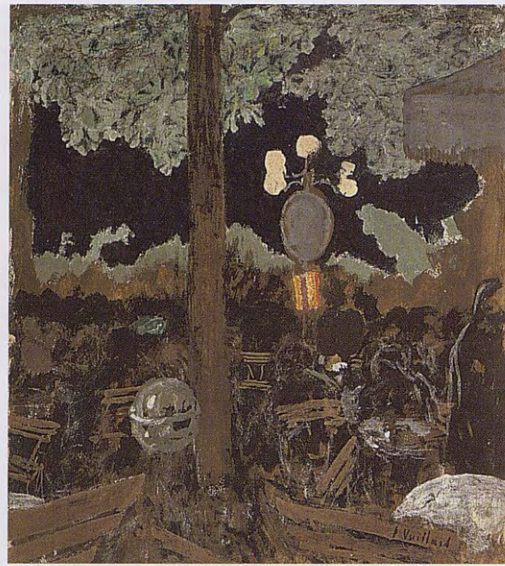
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*

The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (Illinois), Gift of the Joseph and Helen Regenstein Foundation, 1964.2

**Provenance:** Félix Fénéon, Paris, c. 1936 – Fénéon sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 30 May 1947, lot 58 (ill.) – Theodore Schempp, Brodhead (Wisconsin) – Jacques Seligmann, New York – Roger Darnetal, United States – Thannhauser, New York – Helen Regenstein, United States – The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (Illinois), 1964.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 48 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1937, no. 187 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 32 – Chicago, Art Institute, 1974, no. 82 (ill.).

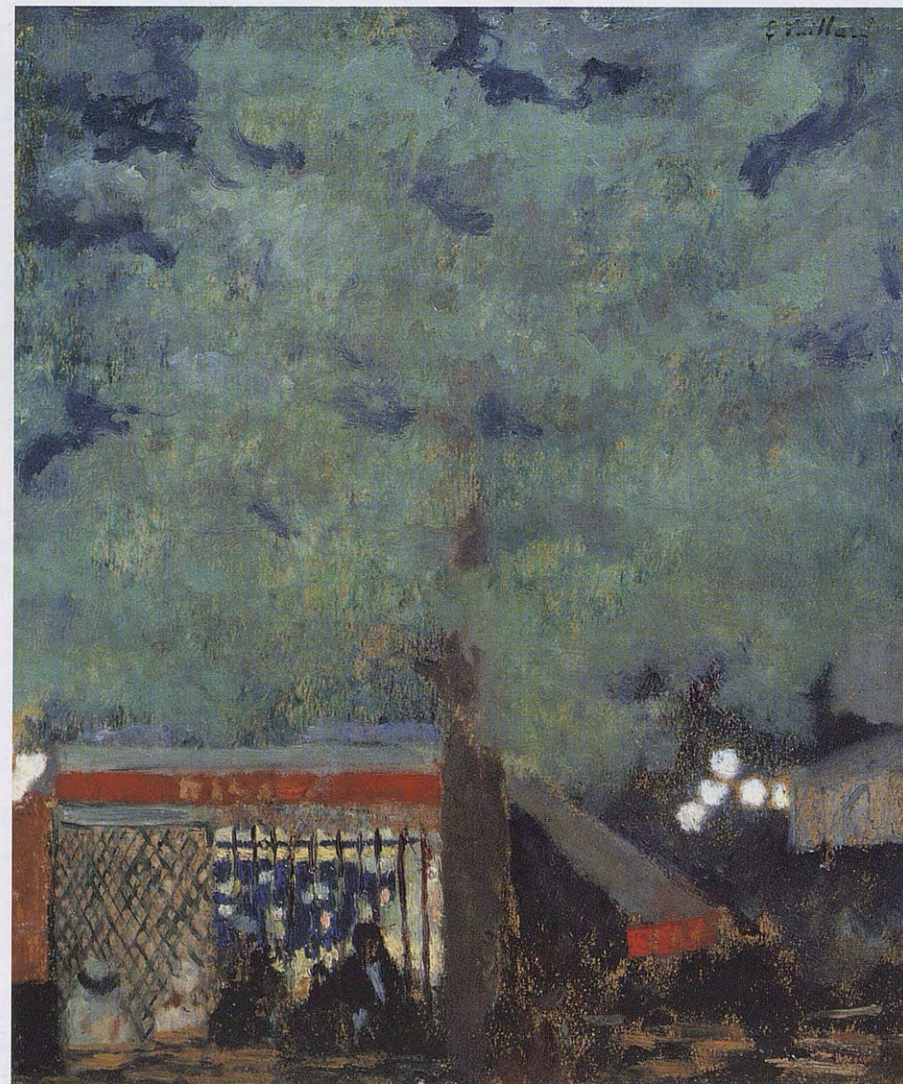
**Bibliography:** *Art Institute of Chicago Quarterly* 58, no. 1, [1964], ill.



V-110

(col. ill.) – Rome, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1994-95, no. 12 (col. ill.) – St.Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 34, p. 103 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Legrand 1986, pp. 326-328 – Pinette and Soulier-François 1992, pp. 196, 197 (col. ill.).



V-112

## V-111

## Café in the Bois de Boulogne, Afternoon

c. 1898

Glue-based distemper on paper, mounted on cardboard, 48 × 51 cm

Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*

Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, Besançon (France), inv. 985.11.1

**Provenance:** Félix Fénéon, Paris – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Adams Brothers Gallery, London – Lefevre, London, 1945 – Mrs. Gillson, Great Britain, 1946 – Collection de M. de La Frégonnière, Cannes (France) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 27 March 1985, lot 323 (col. ill.), bought in; blocked by customs and acquired for the Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, Besançon, with the assistance of the Fonds Régional d'Acquisition pour les Musées de Franche-Comté, 1985.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 47 – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 72, p. 29



V-111

**Description:** Five or six elegantly dressed customers sitting at café tables among the trees, the foliage of which is rendered in different patterns and spreads across most of the painting. (JS)

## V-112

## Guinguette

c. 1898

Oil on cardboard, 33 × 27 cm

Stamp 1, upper right

Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1942 – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibition:** St.Tropez-Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 33, p. 102 (col. ill.).

**Description:** At the foot of a large tree reflecting light against the blue night sky can be seen the red sign-board and glossy carmine-coloured gates of a brightly lit guinguette. Figures in the foreground and shining globes of light on the right. (AC)

## V-113

## The Racecourse

c. 1899 (?)

Oil on cardboard, 32 × 45 cm

Stamp 1, lower left

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arnoé, Paris – Jean-Pierre Selz, Paris – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 24 June 1970, lot 445 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 29 June 1973, lot 40 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 31 Oct. 1975, lot 22, bought in – Sale, Galerie Koller, Zurich, 16 May 1980, lot 5110 (ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.



V-113



V-114

**Description:** A paddock with two women holding parasols near the centre and a few chairs sketched on the right. Cloudy sky. (JS)

## V-114

## The Open-Air Theatre

c. 1897-99

Glue-based distemper on paper, 60 × 49 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A grey balustrade overhung with grey branches, beyond which can be seen an open-air theatre set round with green foliage. Patches of blue and brown depict the seated spectators. To the right of the stage, which is framed by grey pillars hung with garlands, can be seen the raised red curtain. (AC)





V-115

### V-115 The First-Class Compartment

c. 1898-1900  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
panel, 35 × 55.2 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Berri-Lardy, Paris – Erwin Swann, New York – Grace Borgenicht, New York – Robert Rice, Houston (Texas), 1980 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 5 Nov. 1981, lot 190 (col. ill.) – Art market, Paris, 1994 – Sale, Christie's, London, 28 June 1994, lot 133 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 28 Nov. 1995, lot 189 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris, 6 Dec. 1999, lot 5 (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Centre International, Deauville, 16 August 2001, lot 149 (col. ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1955-56, no. 99 – Rome, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 1956, p. 34 (ill.).

**Description:** On the right is the roughly sketched silhouette of a figure reading a newspaper, while in the background a man and woman are seated on either side of a doorway framing a mauve-tinted landscape. (JS)

This may be the painting Vuillard was thinking about when, twenty years later, called up for service during the First World War and making his way to the factories at Oullins run by his friend Thadée Natanson

(cf. X-32.1 and X-32.2), he wrote: 'Thursday 20. journeys railway carriages, visions in the style of Daumier, travellers, baggage, effect of light (dull false colourings, significance, memory of panel of 98)'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. V., Journal, 20 Sept. 1917, III.2, fol. 37r.



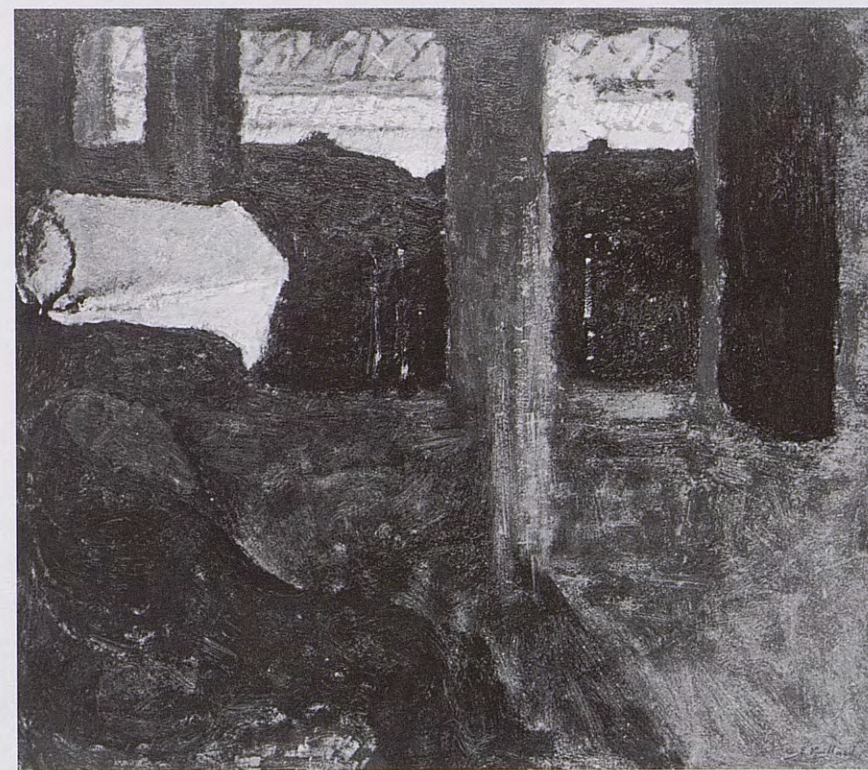
V-116

### V-116 The First-Class Carriage

c. 1898-1900  
Oil on cardboard, 43 × 45 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris – Private collection, France.

**Description:** Two individuals in a railway compartment. On the left is a woman in a large red hat, her head bent over a book; on the right, an elderly man with white side-whiskers and a black skull-cap, looking at her. He is leaning on an armrest with a newspaper spread out next to him, as though putting it aside. (AC)



V-117

### V-117 In the Train

c. 1898-1900  
Oil on cardboard, 47 × 52 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1969, no. 35; and 1973, no. 8.

**Bibliography:** Mauner 1978, p. 238, ill. 93.

**Description:** In the left foreground, the armrest and whitish-grey headrest of a first-class compartment and the blurred black silhouette of a man slumped in his seat. Above the seats on the right can be seen a black and ultramarine-blue curtain. Through the doorway, a black station is visible beneath a steely grey sky. (JS)



V-118

### V-118 Bateau-Mouche

c. 1900  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
panel, 27 × 25 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1942 – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 3 Dec. 1964, lot 106 (ill.) – Mr. and Mrs. Alex M. Lewyt, New York – Private collection.

**Description:** A riverbank lined with russet-coloured trees, next to a black and yellow landing-stage. In the foreground is a brown handrail running along white wire fencing supported by blue uprights. The figures in the foreground are black. (AC)

Here, the Paris landing-stage is clearly recognisable, as are the trees lining the river and the number of the boat. This is clearly a *bateau-mouche* on the Seine.



## VI – The Misia Years (1895-1900)

*'Let this granite at least present its boundary  
Against the black flights of Blasphemy scattered in the future.'*  
Stéphane Mallarmé

During the five last years of the nineteenth century a new Vuillard emerged. His art went beyond the avant-garde aspirations of the day, he was famous, and his legendary shyness had so to speak disappeared; he knew what he wanted, and had acquired, thanks to *Public Gardens*, *The Album* and the *Panels for Doctor Vaguez*, a solid reputation as a decorator. His ninety-six plates for Schopfer (see ill.), surrounded by Van de Velde furniture and paintings by Ranson (see ill.), were a sensation at the exhibition of *L'Art nouveau* at Bing's gallery. Now the leading critics appreciated his style, commenting on it with scholarly praise. This was also the period when, in the company of Vallotton, Bonnard and Denis, he accepted, humbly as ever, the signal honour of participating in exhibitions at *La Libre Esthétique* in Brussels and at the Vollard and Durand-Ruel galleries in Paris. In 1897 the art dealer Ambroise Vollard commissioned from him the series of lithographs *Paysages et Intérieurs*, which demonstrates again, in the minor key, his painterly skill with movement and colours. He became known as a 'true' modern, eliciting comments of approval from critics like André Fontainas, Gustave Geffroy, Henri Ghéon and of course the ever faithful Thadée Natanson. These writers had discovered in Vuillard's work a propensity to obscurity that set him apart from his contemporaries, with his own special delicacy of execution and obvious superiority of intellect; Geffroy saw in him 'the keenest observer of modern life', with the gift of 'indicating a kind of wisdom and gravity by means of a simple sign in the right place.' His penchant for witty arabesques and surprising picture puzzles was enriched by a feeling for values, for depth of space based on the interplay of mirrors and the enticements of decorative motifs, subtle qualities that seem explicable only in arcane Symbolist prose. It will be helpful at this point to

quote a passage from the article 'Lettre d'Angèle' by Henri Ghéon in *L'Ermitage*, published at the same time as the exhibition at the Durand-Ruel gallery in April 1899: 'Vuillard's art is of a quite different order. It is an art of composition, choices and harmony. The subject matters little, but the canvas must be full, balanced and complete. It always is, but Vuillard goes far beyond this concrete goal, in what is more than a simple arrangement of brush strokes and lines. Vuillard has Chardin's sense of intimacy; he penetrates into the hidden life of rooms and of things, giving them sentimental significance by creating an atmosphere for them. In all his canvases something is floating that is not matter, the smallest of his rooms contains 'air', we feel it, we almost see it, and light and shadow charmingly envelop the private scenes he evokes. I know of no one else today who possesses so many gifts as a painter. His pigments are rich, exquisite and varied; he knows



E. V., *Seated Woman in a Blue and White Smock*, 1895, decorated porcelain plate. Private collection.





Paul Ranson, *Three Women Harvesting*, 1895, distemper on canvas.  
Musée Départemental Maurice Denis, 'Le Prieuré', Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

how to place the point of light that illuminates the whole canvas and how to lay down the muted colour that softens it. He has 'taste' in every sense of the word, incorporating it into every detail with scrupulous care, and it is through these minute adjustments that he succeeds in giving the most perfect overall impression. It is impossible to admire this or that element in his paintings; all of them balance each other, are necessary to one another and indissolubly joined. I have seen great paintings, but I have never seen such enchanting ones as these.<sup>22</sup>



Jean Schopfer (Pseudonym: Claude Anet), anonymous photograph, c. 1900. Private collection.

On the other hand, it cannot be claimed, as has sometimes been done, that he has *discovered* a 'new circle' of relationships; Tristan Bernard – his real name was Paul Bernard – was at the Lycée Condorcet with Vuillard, already a generous soul, and in 1889-90 moved in the same artistic circles, not to mention being a regular contributor to *La Revue Blanche*. Jean Schopfer (see ill.), another wealthy, elitist, sporting and cultured dandy, attended the Sorbonne, as did Pierre Veber, and it was the latter who introduced him to Vuillard, possibly at the same time. It can be said without fear of contradiction that the dice had been cast long before. And it is true that this generation was interested in a different kind of art, a trend parallel to what Vuillard was achieving at the same time. He was noticed by colleagues of other 'faiths': Paul Signac, the leading Neo-Impressionist, pointed to his originality in 1898: 'his protagonists are shapeless – he draws admirably well, and if he doesn't paint mouths or hands or feet, it's because he doesn't want to.'<sup>23</sup> He was invited to exhibit in Belgium by the fashionable architect Henry Van de Velde. A little known story about Gauguin, blustering Gauguin, who knew Vuillard, recounts that he woke the latter up one night in April 1895 at his home on Rue Saint-Honoré, before taking the train and leaving Paris for good, to ask him for three hundred francs. Since Vuillard did not have the sum, Gauguin said: 'Wake



Misia and Thadée Natanson, anonymous photograph, c. 1897-99. Private collection.

your mother up – it was three o'clock in the morning – and ask her for it.' The generous and understanding Madame Vuillard willingly gave him the money and Gauguin paid off the debt by giving Vuillard one of his paintings, which he had in his luggage.<sup>24</sup>

Édouard was introduced to the Natanson brothers by Pierre Veber in the autumn of 1891 in the offices of *La Revue Blanche*, then installed in cramped quarters on Rue des Martyrs<sup>25</sup> (ninth *arrondissement*). In about 1895 the young artist was in a sense 'adopted' by the Natansons, Thadée and Misia (see ill.), whom he saw almost daily in Rue Laffitte and later in their apartment on Rue Saint-Florentin near the Place de la Concorde. Not only did the newly married couple demonstrate a taste, a way of life and a culture that fascinated Vuillard (see ill.), but they knew collectors likely to succumb to the charm of his paintings. Becoming a friend of the Natansons was like a religious conversion.

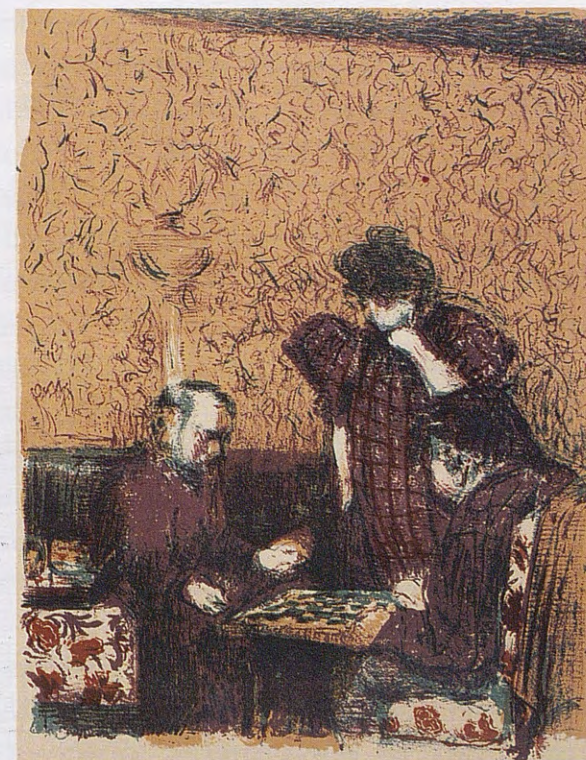
With their help he was finally able to approach Mallarmé (see ill.) during his first real country holiday in Valvins (1896). The poet of the *Divagations* had a house near La Grangette that the couple rented that year. Thanks to the magnetic presence of Mallarmé, who was visited by many intellectuals at his retreat in Valvins, Vuillard would have met luminaries as different as James Whistler, Julie Manet and Élémer Bourges. Octave Mirbeau and Alfred Jarry were



Paul Nadar, Stéphane Mallarmé with a scarf, 1895, photograph.  
© Nadar, photographic archive, Paris, Spadern.

guests of the Natansons. This period in the countryside was what gave the painter the notion of founding a contemporary Abbey of Thélème. Although he still clung to his time alone, he was now attracted by these aristocratic and intellectual groups where people talked about the arts or read the latest articles on political news and philosophy in the light of oil lamps, recited new poems and ran the risks of culinary experimentation, yet went for bicycle rides as well in the surrounding countryside. He could have written on the beams of La Grangette: 'Science without conscience is but the ruination of the soul.'<sup>26</sup>

His passion for Mallarmé's poetry dated from before 1890. It may well have been Kerr-Xavier Roussel at the Lycée Condorcet who drew his attention to the author of *Le Faune*. Certainly, in 1888-89 Vuillard copied out by hand the whole of Mallarmé's *Hérodiade*, which for the rest of his life he tried to learn by heart.<sup>27</sup> He often recited *Le Faune*, taking turns with Kerr-Xavier Roussel, and his diaries between 1920 and 1940 are sprinkled with references to the 'sylvain d'haleine première' [flute-playing wood god]. On finding two drawings by Vuillard in *La Revue Blanche* Bonnard noted: 'The one for the L'Œuvre album resembles Mallarmé in its obscurity at first glance and in the purity of style in what we notice thereafter.'<sup>28</sup> But we do not agree with Jacques Salomon when he claims that Vuillard was struck dumb when invited to one of Mallarmé's 'Tuesdays': 'He was taken one evening to the poet's house and heard, in a hushed atmosphere, the first reading of *Un coup de dés*. The evening left him nonplussed and the 'cliquey' atmosphere



E. V., *The Game of Draughts* from *Paysages et Intérieurs* (Misia, Tristan Bernard, Thadée), 1899, colour lithograph, 34 x 26.5 cm.  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



of the dining room in the Rue de Rome chilled him instantly. He merely smiled when we asked him what impression he had formed of the reading of the famous poem.<sup>9</sup> This account differs from *all* the evidence of his friends and family, and above all, from the artist's own Journal after 1920. Vuillard heard Mallarmé's lines in his head all the time, and it is certain that this poetry, with its supremely elliptical style, exerted a lasting influence on his art. André Chastel, who wrote so brilliantly about Vuillard, describes perfectly the relationship between the painter and the poet: 'The profound study of the simple motif that destroyed the old imaginative leaps springs from an impulse both sensual and abstract. He demands a *decorative link* where the object fits in place, the shapes being doubly strengthened by the decision to isolate them and by the pleasure they evoke, which in turn reinforces them. This decorative link, as we know, exists in the poems of Mallarmé, where it is so evident as to constitute a challenge. [...] The painter is trying to link together as fast as possible the reciprocal interplay of the elements, which show by their relationship alone the seriousness or the charm of the inner spectacle, but to achieve this end he takes from the element itself all descriptive power. Like the poet, he suggests only one equivalent to the particular term, making the total relationship, the syntax of the painting, express the higher reality common to both object and painting. This is the abstract quality that recalls Mallarmé, no longer the authority of the decorative link: a muted vibration, true to the lower ranges of green, brown and blue, with a counterpoint in meticulously placed yellow and red.'<sup>10</sup> There is a general tendency to equate Vuillard more with Proust's world – the holidays on the coast of Normandy, the attention paid to unimportant things – but insisting on this would lead to a mistake. We can simply point to the memoirs of Alfred Sutro, a man of the theatre who was the British Lugné-Poe, with whom Vuillard stayed when he visited London: 'Vuillard was devoted, passionately devoted, to the work of Stéphane Mallarmé, the philosopher-poet and mystic, master of the harmonious line. Vuillard tried again and again to communicate this enthusiasm to me; but while I could admire his majestic cadences, I annoyed Vuillard by demanding an explanation of what, in his opinion, had no need of explanation!'<sup>11</sup>

These were, above all, the years of his passionate friendship with Misia, the highly gifted young Polish woman whom Thadée had married in April 1893 when she was only sixteen. It seems obvious today that Vuillard fell madly



A lunch at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne (from left to right, Cipa Godebski, Marthe Mellot, Thadée Natanson, a maid, Vuillard, Misia Natanson, Romain Coolus, Ida Godebska and Alfred Natanson), anonymous photograph, 1897-99. Private collection.

in love with her – either immediately, or else slowly but surely as the predictable result of constant contact. Vuillard helped Misia to decorate her apartment, Misia scolded him for his shabby clothes, they explored the countryside around Valvins, and between 1897 and 1899 the area around the estate of Le Relais at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne (see ill.), another significant country holiday in Vuillard's life. It is not so important to know whether there was more than tenderness between the painter and his muse; on the other hand it is blindingly apparent that his painting, even when Misia was not in the picture, was conditioned by the imprint in space of her passing. *Woman in an Armchair* (VI-34), *Cipa Listening to Misia Playing the Piano* (VI-38), *Lady in Blue and Child* (VI-53) and especially the very intimate *Nape of Misia's Neck* (VI-61) are his 'canto d'amore' (love song) to the fairy musician. She was 'the Pompadour of the Revue Blanche',<sup>12</sup> very beautiful but capricious, tyrannical and prone to change her mind (see ill.). In her memoirs *Misia by Misia*, written late in her life, she blithely shows herself in the best of lights, but a quite accurate picture of the situations and protagonists can be read between the lines. She includes a wonderful undated letter sent her by the painter: 'I have always been shy in your presence, but the security, the assurance of a perfect understanding relieved me of all embarrassment; nothing was lost by this understanding being a wordless one.'<sup>13</sup> In front of the placid Thadée, who adored her, she enjoyed making conquests of all these cocky intellectuals. In a letter to Vallotton, the wise Édouard cannot help telling him: 'I delivered your message to Misia, who is fed up about returning to Paris and



Misia Natanson, anonymous photograph, c. 1896-97. Private collection.



Paul Vallotton, *Misia at Her Toilette*, 1898, tempera on cardboard. Private collection.

says you are one of the few, very few individuals she can think of without rage. That's her word of the moment. Everything enrages her outside of the life she leads here, I consider her to be living the best moments of her life.'<sup>14</sup> For Toulouse-Lautrec, Coolus and Vallotton she was what the English call a tease, a flirt. And Toulouse-Lautrec, who was anything but a fool, lashed out at her in a fantastic sketch where he draws her as a portly arrogant matron, flanked by a grumpy Vuillard (see ill.). But if Vuillard began to give free rein to his sensuality, abandoning himself to what Chastel aptly called a 'libertinism of sensation',<sup>15</sup> it was due to Misia, to her presence in his world and to the obsessions that her voice, her scent and her movements awakened in him. The women in the dressmaker's workshop – his mother and sister – inspired some brilliant compositions, their iconography often demonstrating a sort of neurasthenic *hubris*. Such is not the case with *The Drawing-Room with Three Lamps* (VI-44) or the *Schopfer Panels*, that show the artist has reached a confident, tranquil maturity. At this period he was incorporating Misia into all his large decorative panels. She turns up in the diptych commissioned by Jean Schopfer in 1898, *The Garden of Le Relais at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne* (VI-99.1 and VI-99.2); she appears in the *The Stéphane Natanson Screen* (VI-101), again

in *The Lilacs* (VI-102), and later, from behind, on the heights of *A Walk in the Vineyard* (VI-103). Thadée's wife was to be seen everywhere at this time; she was the ideal embodiment of the 'conspiracy' between painting and music in which Vuillard believed so passionately. She was a gifted pianist, one of Gabriel Fauré's favourite, and her inspired flamboyant playing captivated the *La Revue Blanche* coterie. Vuillard's vision of reality, which melded bodies, faces, inanimate objects, flowers, draperies and light into a single texture, had been developed and supported by his contact with Misia, whose appearance in the interiors he painted represented a daily miracle for him. Unfortunately, during these crucial years (1895 and 1907) Vuillard's Journal disappeared, and we have little direct information from his correspondence. At most the letters between him and Vallotton – they became even closer friends at Villeneuve (see ill.) – give us some idea of that period, and it has much been commented on by contemporary witnesses (Annette Vaillant and experts (Gold and Fildale, Georges Bernier). In any case, we can link the disappearance of that part of the Journal to the incredibly careless handling it must have gone through after Vuillard's death, when it was passed from person to person; obviously, someone must have made off with some of the notebooks. Those concerning Misia undoubt-





Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Dinner at the Home of M. and Mme Thadée Natanson* (Vuillard, Misia, Vallotton and Thadée), c. 1899, turpentine diluted paint on cardboard. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas.

edly, but also and more importantly, those covering the start of his relationship with Lucy Hessel.

The 'Misia years' were also those of *La Revue Blanche*, although Vuillard was doing less work for that distinguished periodical. Lucien Muhlfield wrote the book column and Romain Coolus was the theatre critic. We can read in it the delirious piece 'Le chasseur de chevelures' illustrated by Tristan Bernard and Pierre Veber. August Strindberg, in Paris for a short stay, published in the magazine a shockingly misogynist article, 'De l'infériorité de la femme'<sup>16</sup>, while earlier Paul Adam had written a brave defence of homosexuality entitled 'L'assaut malicieux' illustrated by a Toulouse-Lautrec drawing of Oscar Wilde.<sup>17</sup> In the publishing hierarchy the dandies like Robert de Montesquiou and Pierre Louys were the crème de la crème. But a certain boredom with Symbolism was beginning to be felt, especially with the 'Painters of the Soul' variety, and a good number of the Nabis admitted to feeling irritated by the Salon of the Rose+Croix. Octave Mirbeau was bombarding the 'aesthetic painters' with refreshingly savage articles: in 'Des Lys! Des Lys!', where he goes so far as to attack Maurice Denis, and in particular his marvellous *Decor for the bedroom of a young girl* shown at the Galerie Bing: 'I am not a fool and I know what a soul is. I know that a soul cannot sleep in a bed, or look at itself in a mirror, or sit in a chair or pee in a pot. No, it does all that with curves, we're told. Only, could you tell me why these souls, which is to say these fluid, weightless beings, require furniture that weighs three thousand kilos?'<sup>18</sup>

Many things changed for Vuillard in these years. He soon ceased making lithographs for the *Revue* and gradually cut back on his theatre painting. 1896 was widely considered to be 'the *Ubu roi* year'. Jarry's play, which premiered on December 10, had long been known to the Nabis for its numerous tirades. Vuillard worked on the sets with Bonnard and Sérusier, with death in his soul; he was prostrate with grief at the death of his nephew 'Petit-Jean' some weeks earlier. *Ubu*, a gigantic mockery of Symbolism, had a salutary effect on the painter of *The Public Gardens*. The shift could not have been more apparent: Vuillard in 1897 would paint no more *Women in the Garden* or *Le Cantique des cantiques* (III-31) as he did in 1891. His Symbolism grew more hermetic and withdrawn in comparison with painters like Lévy-Dhurmer and Séon, who were determined to see sphinxes and ghouls everywhere. As André Chastel summed it up very well: 'It is undeniable that with his muted palette and the density of his pigment, his difficult, inscrutable compositions and the effects that we perceive slowly like a perfume evaporating, he transposed into his art the methods of Symbolist poetry.'<sup>19</sup>

Finally, these tumultuous years were also those of the Dreyfus affair, which left *La Revue Blanche* in a state of total confusion. Across the board the contributors, including Vuillard, stood up for Dreyfus's innocence, and this courageous stance brought them temporarily together with writers who had always been hostile to the *Revue*, like Émile Zola. Of the painter's friends only Denis, Sérusier and Forain were anti-Dreyfus, as was Degas. Interestingly enough, Vuillard had never been an anti-Semite. It is true that he had been educated by the Marist brothers – moderation in all things – and happily not by the Assumptionists, who had declared war on the Jews with hysterical violence. The same could not be said of some of his relations, although we must distinguish between the pre-Dreyfus attitude, when the Catholic bourgeoisie held immemorial prejudices against the Jews, and the anti-Semitism that now came to the fore, the visceral, pseudo-scientific, indeed criminal, convictions of men like Édouard Dumont and Charles Maurras. In a letter to Vuillard in 1891, Pierre Bonnard mentions a collector's interest in his art: 'Another story. I had a letter from an amateur buyer, this one a Jew, who wanted to buy 6 of my presentation works, the 4 panels, the cat study and the portrait. I've just replied today and sent him prices, but with a Jew I'm on my guard. He says in his letter that my exhibition gave him great pleasure. Maybe he's a real art lover.

However, I find it hard to believe (he's called Daniel Halévy; no mistake).<sup>20</sup> Shocking though they may seem to us today, these remarks of Bonnard's simply reflect persistent prejudices of the time in France ('right-thinking' people blamed 'the Jews' for the crash of the eminently Catholic Union bancaire). On becoming involved with *La Revue Blanche*, Bonnard soon changed, surrounded as he was by Thadée, Misia and Coolus. After 1900 he became very close to the Bernheim brothers, just as he kept his regard for Léon Blum until after the Liberation. Maurice Denis, the most Catholic of the painters and at one time close to the Action française, never made such anti-Semitic blunders. At most, he wrote the following in his Journal about the exhibition at the Galerie Durand-Ruel, *Les Symbolistes et les Néo-impressionnistes* (March 1899), in which his own canvases hung side by side with those of the other Nabis: 'Vuillard, Bonnard, Vallotton group: 1. *Small paintings*; 2. *dark*; 3. *From life*; 4. *done from memory, without models*; 5. *unimportance of the figures and consequently of the drawing*; 6. *would do better in a small ill-lit apartment than in a studio or an exhibition*; 7. *complicated medium – Semitic taste*; add to these Valtat (ignoring the numbers 2 and 6), and Redon (ignoring numbers 3 and 5).

'Sérusier, me, Ranson group; 1. *large paintings*; 2. *painted with pure, more or less dark colours*; 3. *symbolic*; 4. *use of some documentation, geometric measurements or models*; 5. *great importance of the human figure*; 6. *must have been painted in studio*; 7. *very simple unified medium – Latin taste* – Article by Geffroy that praises another character in the first group; 8. *modern subjects*.'<sup>21</sup> Classical clarity is, therefore, timeless. 'Latin', as opposed to the hazards of an hermetic, 'Semitic' language; 'Latin taste' as opposed to 'Semitic taste': words were used that would unfortunately be taken up by certain critics in the 1920s and 1930s (Camille Mauclair and Waldemar George at their head) in much more sickening terms. The lives of Thadée Natanson, Léon Blum, Tristan Bernard and Lucien Muhlfield give us a glimpse of an era when leading Jewish families respected their rituals but had no qualms about sending their children to Catholic schools. Theirs was not a very assertive Judaism, although the 'Affair' led many of them to wonder about the supposed 'solidarity' of the French people. Tristan Bernard was in the habit of declaring: 'Not only am I a Jew, but my financial position permits me not to be an Israelite!' And in Thadée Natanson's office at *La Revue Blanche* a copy of the Sybil in the cathedral of Strasbourg, a witness to the vandalism

of the Prussians in 1870, expressed his love of France for the benefit of visitors (*The Green Lamp*, VI-105). Vuillard's whole circle was patriotic, without ever using the same sabre-rattling language as those two ridiculous clowns of the nationalism of the day Rochefort and Deroulède. Throughout his life Vuillard maintained an affection for Thadée, his two brothers and their families, and for Coolus – and indeed for more recently acquired friends, notably the Hessels. During the 1930s, when his circle of intimates included other new faces – Prosper-Émile Weil and his wife, the art dealer Alfred Daber, Sam Salz, and above all the Hessels who 'adopted' him at their Château des Clayes – his Journal shows him to be increasingly worried about the rise of anti-Semitism, especially after Léon Blum was manhandled and seriously injured in the street by hoodlums from the Action française.<sup>22</sup> To Vuillard's mind, the Republic had survived many vicissitudes and would always manage to surmount these political contradictions. Speaking of Rembrandt's *The Carpenter's Family*<sup>23</sup>, he noted humorously: 'He too only painted Jews!'<sup>24</sup> And it was the Hessels who, in the confusion of the German invasion, when many of the artist's friends had vanished into thin air, were there to close the old painter's eyes when he died.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gustave Geffroy, *Le Journal*, 15 March 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Henri Ghéon, 'Lettre d'Angèle', *L'Ermitage*, April 1899, no. 8, pp. 314-315.

<sup>3</sup> Rewald 1952, p. 277.

<sup>4</sup> Handwritten note by Antoine Salomon who had heard the anecdote from Vuillard. Sadly there is now no work by Gauguin in the contents of Vuillard's studio.

<sup>5</sup> It later moved to 1, Rue Laffitte (on the 'chic' side of the ninth *arrondissement*), near Ambroise Vollard's gallery.

<sup>6</sup> The motto of the Abbey of Thélème, together with 'Do what you want' in Rabelais's *Gargantua* (1534).

<sup>7</sup> Hand-written document, Salomon archives.

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Pierre Bonnard to Vuillard, 17 September 1895, Salomon archives.

<sup>9</sup> Salomon 1945, pp. 33-34. We think that here Jacques Salomon was expressing his own opinion of Mallarmé, not really Vuillard's deepest thoughts.

<sup>10</sup> Chastel 1947, pp. 19-20, 22.

<sup>11</sup> Sutro 1933, p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> This happy phrase is from Georges Bernier: see Bernier 1991, p. 58.

<sup>13</sup> Sert 1952, p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Vuillard to Félix Vallotton, Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, 27 November 1899, in Guisan and Jakubec 1973, p. 191.

<sup>15</sup> Chastel 1946, p. 36.

<sup>16</sup> August Strindberg, 'De l'infériorité de la femme', *La Revue Blanche*, January 1895, pp. 1-10.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Adam, 'L'assaut malicieux', *La Revue Blanche*, 1<sup>er</sup> term 1895, p. 458.

<sup>18</sup> Octave Mirbeau, 'Les artistes de l'âme', *Combats esthétiques*, Séguier, Paris, 1993, vol. II, p. 133.

<sup>19</sup> Chastel 1946, p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Pierre Bonnard to Vuillard, 13 April 1891. This letter has, annoyingly, been censored in *Bonnard-Vuillard. Correspondance*, Gallimard, Paris, 2001. I thought it apposite to print it in its entirety: 'My dear Vuillard / You can guess how much I enjoyed your letter. I have read it several times to savour it. An official painter



who takes our painting seriously, who has an inkling of what we have attempted to do with art: that's an event. / It's also a really good thing you happened to be there. The conversation you had with him and his visit to you must have made a deep impression on him. / You think I cannot do business with him. I am asking 100 francs and permission to go and see him when I come back to Paris. / I think he'll find the price reasonable but I would rather give him the painting for nothing. / Another story. I had a letter from an amateur, this one a Jew, who wanted to buy 6 of my presentation works, the 4 panels, the cat study and the portrait. I've just replied today and sent him prices, but with a Jew I'm on my guard. He says in his letter that my exhibition gave him great pleasure. Maybe he's a real art lover. However, I find that hard to believe (he's called Daniel Halévy; no mistake.) / I'm waiting for my brother to be somewhat permanent in his social position so I can fix my return too. What is certain is that I'll be back before August. I am starting here on work I can finish in

Paris. I don't see how to get anything out of my *Solfège*. I must try to think about the men who decorated missals in the old days, or the Japanese putting art into encyclopaedic dictionaries to give me courage. / Best regards and thank you for your good offices. / P. Bonnard / I have made an excessively well behaved little picture. Am I becoming classical or am I going soft in the head?

<sup>21</sup> Maurice Denis on the exhibition at Durand-Ruel. March 1899, in Denis 1957a, p. 150. The italics are ours.

<sup>22</sup> E. V., Journal, 13 February 1936, IV.9, fol. 40r.

<sup>23</sup> Rembrandt, *Holy Family (The Carpenter's Family)*, 1640, oil on canvas, 41 x 34 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

<sup>24</sup> Salomon 1945, p. 93.

<sup>25</sup> Alphonse Bellier also helped, and signed the death certificate.







VI-1

### VI-1 Woman with a Red Scarf, probably Misia Natanson

c. 1895-99  
Oil on cardboard, 19 × 31 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal  
(Germany), Inv. G 1155

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris, 1942 – Aktuaryus, Zurich (Switzerland) – Baron Eduard von der Heydt, Ascona (Switzerland) – Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, 1964.

**Exhibitions:** Zurich, Kunstgewerbemuseum, 1944 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 28 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** *Werk-Chronik*, May 1949, p. 59 (ill.) – Wachtmann 1968 – Aust 1977, p. 149, fig. 242.

### VI-2 At the Piano

c. 1896  
Oil on cardboard, 21.5 × 26 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.



VI-2

**Description:** A somewhat caricatured depiction of three men (the bearded one on the right, seen against the light, may be Tristan Bernard) gathered around a young woman (Misia) seated in a yellow dress at the piano. The cardboard support used to define Misia's face is 'coloured' by the adjacent tones and contrasts with the brightly lit background. (AC)

Misia is known to have charmed her audience with the virtuosity of her piano playing. In this small picture she is presented in full profile against a dazzling background. Recalling in her memoirs Mallarmé's visits to La Grangette at Valvins, she said of the poet: 'I used to play music for him in exchange for his fairy-tales. Never have I had such a marvellous audience. He knew how to listen like no one else. He alone gave me, whenever I performed a work I was passionately fond of, the irrecoverable feeling of a first encounter'.<sup>1</sup> 'On 21 September 1896, Misia performed dance music by Handel, including the *Passacaglia*, before the Mallarmés, the Bourges, Julie Manet and her cousins.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sert 1952, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance*, VIII, edited and annotated by Henri Mondor and Lloyd James Austin, Paris, Gallimard, 1983, 'Chronologie', p. 353.

### VI-3 Reading

1896  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on panel,  
26 × 29 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 47 [*La Lecture*] – Alfred Athis Natanson, Paris, 600 F – Romain Coolus, Paris, c. 1934 – Jean Walther, Paris – Paul Rosenberg, New York – Alex Maguy, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Galerie Beaux-Arts, 1934, no. 155.

### VI-4 Conversation at the Natansons' at Valvins

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 32 × 35.5 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection



VI-4



VI-3

**Provenance:** Julien Magnin, Tunis – Frédéric Henry, Paris, 1905 – Paul Pétridès, Paris – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Vincent O'Brien, Cashel (Ireland), c. 1960 – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** London, Tooth & Sons, Nov.-Dec. 1962, no. 15 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** *Apollo* 76, no. 9, Nov. 1962, p. 15 (ill.) – *The Burlington Magazine* 104, no. 716, Nov. 1962, p. 71 (ill.) – *The Connoisseur* 151, no. 609, Nov. 1962, p. 5 (ill.).





VI-5

### VI-5 Evening, Misia Seen from the Back, Bent over a Table

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 29.7 × 26.7 cm  
Signed and dated, upper right:  
*E Vuillard / 96*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Alfred Sutro, London, 1896, 250 F – Lefevre, London – Montague Shearman, London, 5 Feb. 1935 – Lefevre, London – Étienne Bignou, Paris, 27 April 1940 – Private collection.

**Description:** A woman seen from behind in a dark housecoat with pale dots, seated on a square-back chair; her elbows propped on a table in front of a window. Her chignon protrudes from her nightcap. In the left foreground is a fireplace, the door of its plate warmer standing open against the back of the chair. (JS)



VI-6

A beautiful, elaborately worked picture in the Dutch vein. The scene is sketched in great detail in the artist's 'memorandum-diary' ('Agenda Souvenir') for 1896 (see ill.).



E. V., study from the *Agenda Souvenir*, 1896, graphite on paper, 8.3 × 5.6 cm. Private collection.

What Jacques Salomon quite naturally mistook for a nightcap must in fact be the globe of a lamp set on the table in front of Misia, whose chignon we gradually recognize as such.

### VI-6 Interior with Figures. Misia Natanson and Cipa Godebski at Valvins

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 26.5 × 30 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right:  
*E Vuillard 96*  
Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, 500 F – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 9 March 1935, lot 58 [*Personnages dans un intérieur*] – P. Ebstein, 7,600 F – Léon Delaroche, Paris – Private collection, France.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 50.

**Description:** Clad in a black dress with yellow dots, the sitter is seen full-face, bent over a light-grey table, while, to the left, a man in dark grey stands gazing down at her. In the background is a vase of pink flowers in front of bluish-grey and green wallpaper. Brown-framed window with yellow panes on the right. (JS)

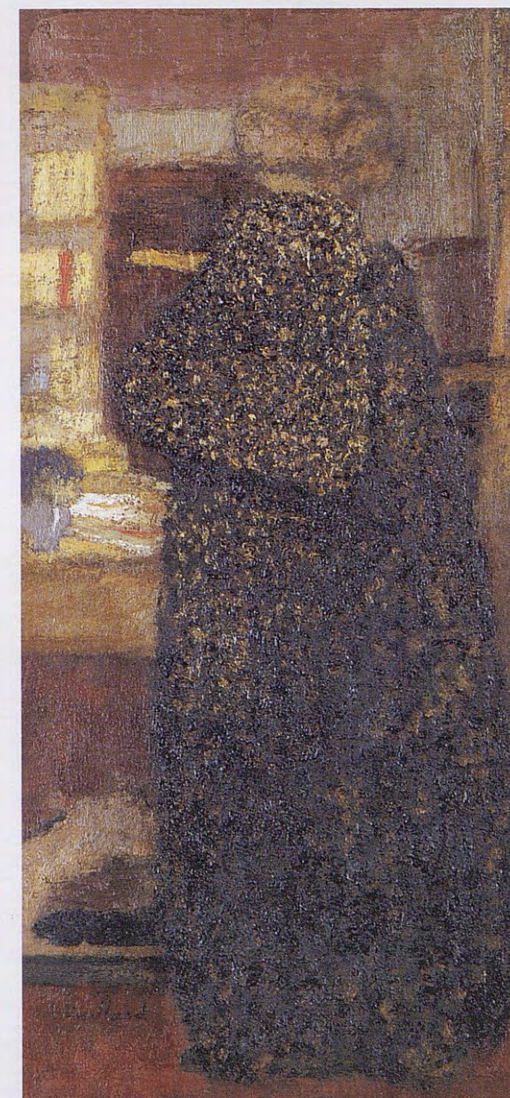
### VI-7 Misia in a Black and Yellow Peignoir

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 32.5 × 15.5 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection, Paris

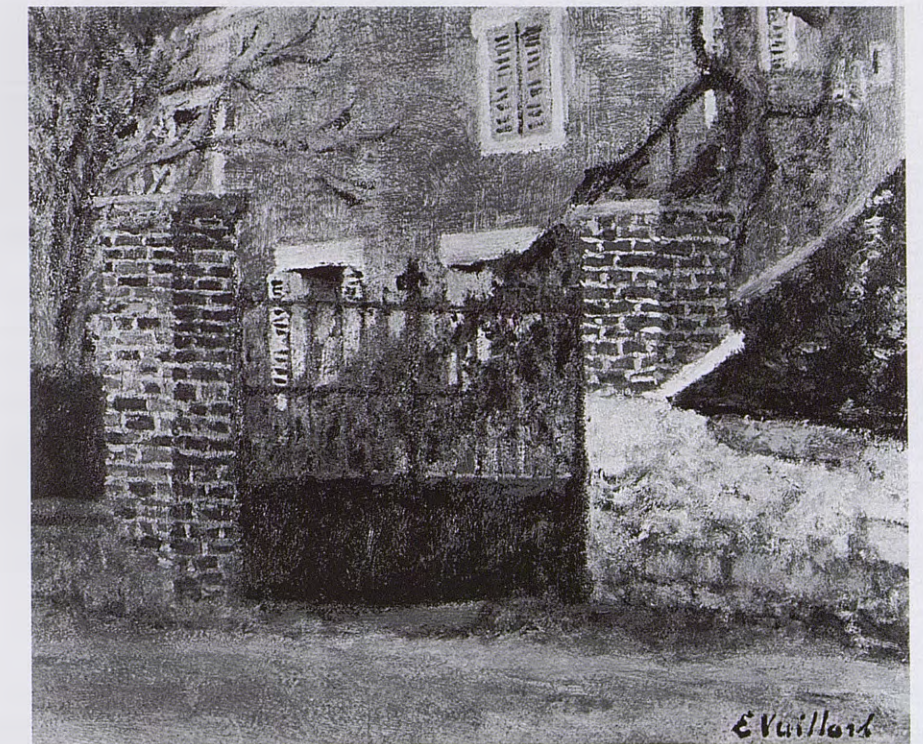
**Provenance:** Romain Coolus, Paris – Alain Weil – Private collection, France – Galerie Bellier, Paris, 1999 – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 39 [*Femme en peignoir noir et jaune*].

Misia wears the same 'Liberty-print' dressing-gown in Vuillard's portrayal of her during his stay at Valvins (see VI-5 and VI-6). This appealing little picture belonged for roughly half a century to Romain Coolus, who may have been one of the lucky few



VI-7



VI-8

from the *Revue Blanche* crowd to have enjoyed the favours of Thadée Natanson's capricious wife. Coolus gave it to his nephew Alain Weil in 1947 (see XII-157), on the occasion of Weil's marriage to a certain Mademoiselle Jacob.

### VI-8 The Gate to Stéphane Mallarmé's Garden at Valvins

1896  
Oil on canvas, 26 × 31.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Alan Denzer, New York, c. 1938 – René Seligmann, New York, 1960 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** New York, Seligmann, 1930, no. 32 – Chicago, Art Institute, 1938-39, no. 24 – Washington D.C., Phillips Memorial Gallery, 1939, no. 1.

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1961, p. 46 (ill.); and 1968, p. 72 (ill.) – Mauner 1978, p. 269, fig. 157.

**Description:** The stairs leading to the floor on which the poet lived can be made out between the two brick pillars in the middle ground. (JS)



E. V., preparatory drawing for *The Gate to Stéphane Mallarmé's Garden at Valvins*, graphite on paper, 5.4 × 8.2 cm. Private collection.









VI-12

## VI-12 The Attic of La Grangette at Valvins

1896

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 44.5 x 64 cm

Signed and dated, upper right:

Vuillard 96

Private collection, New York

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Ambroise Vollard, Paris, c. 1899, 200 F – Schwoil, Paris – Dr. Christoph Bernouilli, Basle (Switzerland) – Jacques Seligmann, New York, c. 1954 – Samuel H. Maslon, Minneapolis (Minnesota), c. 1956 – E. V. Thaw, New York – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – B. E. Besinger, Chicago (Illinois), 1966 – William Kennedy, New York – Wendel Cherry, Kentucky – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 25 Oct. 1972, lot 55 (col. ill.), bought in – Maurice Sternberg, Chicago, after 1982 – Jack S. Josey, Houston (Texas) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 18 Nov. 1986, lot 28 (col. ill.) – Private collection, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 102 (col. ill.) [*Room under the Eaves*] – Detroit, Institute of Arts, 1954, no. 136 – Minneapolis, Institute of Arts,

1956; and 1960, no. 119 – London, Tooth & Sons, April-May 1966, no. 23 (ill.) – Chicago, Art Institute, 1969 – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 43 (ill.) – Amarillo, Art Center, 1982, no. 26.

**Bibliography:** Ritchie 1954, p. 16 – Preston 1971, pp. 94-95 (col. ill.) – Gold and Fizzdale 1980, p. 58 – Georges 1982, p. 154 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 252-253, fig. 118.

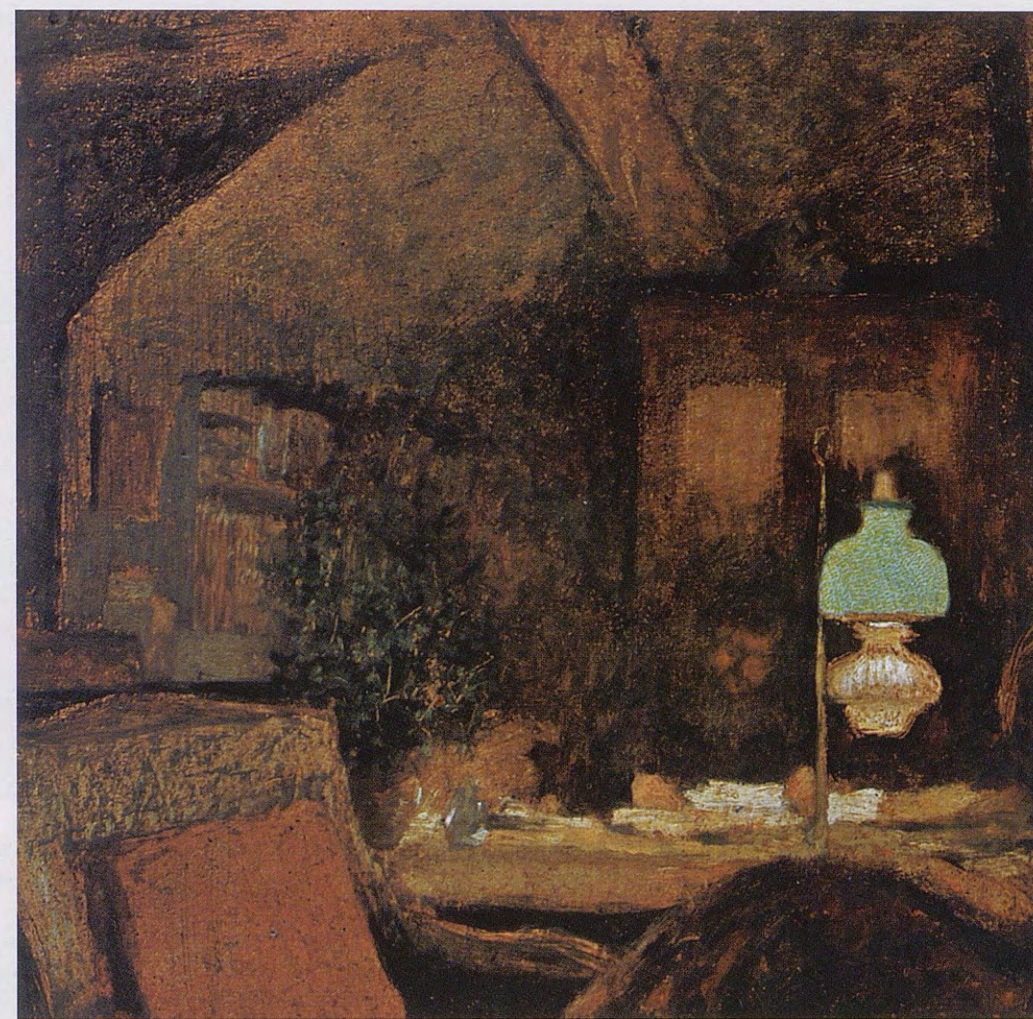
Note the splendid effect created by the intersecting rafters illuminated by the paraffin lamp, which casts a luminous pattern above the heads of Misia and Thadée absorbed in reading and writing (see ill.). The skewed geometry of the beams accentuates the room's depth and counterbalances the upright piano and red armchair in the foreground – which look as if they had been taken straight from one of the artist's Nabi works (cf. *Under the Lamp*, IV-78, for example). A single source of light (the lamp with the green globe that was to accompany Vuillard's portrayals of Thadée for several years to come) is all it takes to spread the magic and mystery of night throughout this hushed, enclosed space. Its glow appears to encompass both the 'elective



Thadée Natanson,  
c. 1895, photograph.  
Private collection.

affinities' between two persons the painter was immensely fond of, and their common intellectual curiosity. 'My uncle Thadée', his nephew would later recall, was 'an awesome potentate whose days of happiness were numbered'. As for Misia, she was a 'refined, raffish princess who covered the walls [of their homes] at Villeneuve, Valvins and Paris with floral-patterned calico. She stood out against the backdrop of these innocent hangings, to which she gave a stylish air; a muse and siren, the Nabis' *dame de beauté*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vaillant 1963, p. 14.



VI-13

## VI-13 The Attic at Valvins. Thadée Natanson at His Worktable

1896

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 23 x 24 cm or 34.5 x 35.5 cm

Signed and dated, upper left: E Vuillard 96

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Alfred Athis Natanson, Paris; Denise Tabah (née Natanson), Rueil-Malmaison (France) – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 12 May 1962, lot 183 (col. ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.

This seems to be the first of Vuillard's 'portraits' of his steadfast friend until 1940: Thadée Natanson (see *Thadée Natanson*, VI-64, *Portrait of Thadée Natanson in an Armchair*, VII-404, *Reine Vaure in an Evening Dress*, IX-236) A refined intellectual, an unfailingly generous host, the husband of an extremely young woman who enjoyed per-

turbing the artists in their circle with her extravagant ways, the director of the *Revue Blanche* was also attracted to the most daring business deals. Annette Natanson, to whose sister Denise this painting once belonged, left this amusing portrait of her 'Uncle Thadée': 'An aesthete taken with the most elaborate schemes, [he] had a genius for business – a frequently unlucky genius. His irresistible enthusiasms would lead him to involve his brothers, sometimes his close friends, occasionally even the maids – who were nearly

always enamoured of his grand ways – in his hazardous ventures. He would arrive for lunch half an hour late and kiss his exasperated sister-in-law's hand, but no one ever chose flowers as well as he. Never have I seen anything to match his enormous pigskin cigar case, he had bought in Vienna and which he would extract from the depths of his morning coat. He had the appetite of a horse and would order extraordinary meals from Larue... This frivolous, idealistic giant, who was loved by his friends and was a great friend to women, would present strange, 'useful' gifts to the little girl I then was.'<sup>1</sup>

Shortly before his death in 1951, Thadée Natanson wrote two volumes of reminiscences – *Peints à leur tour*<sup>2</sup> and *Le Bonnard que je propose*<sup>3</sup> – that are invaluable guides to anyone seeking to learn more about artistic circles in late-nineteenth-century France.



E. V., *La Grangette at Valvins*, 1896, graphite, pen and colour pencil on paper, 8.2 x 10.1 cm. Private collection.

<sup>1</sup> Vaillant 1956, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Natanson 1948a.

<sup>3</sup> Thadée Natanson, *Le Bonnard que je propose*, Geneva, Pierre Cailler, 1951.





VI-14

# VI-14

## The Attic at Valvins. The Lamp

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 20 × 20 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection – Stolen from Galerie Maeght, Paris, in May 1966.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 55 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 43 [*La Lampe à abat-jour vert*] – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 31 (ill.) – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 18 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 27 (ill.) – Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 52.

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1961, p. 47 (col. ill.); and 1968, pp. 64-65 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 77.

**Description:** *Thadée Natanson conversing in the attic of his country home (not far from Mallarmé's) with the novelist Élémer Bourges. The massive roof beams come together above the two standing men, and a fair-haired woman can be seen, more lightly sketched, at bottom left. To the right of centre is a piece of furniture, vividly lit by a lamp with a green shade, and, on the wall above the brown door in the background, Toulouse-Lautrec's poster of Misia. (AC)*



VI-15

# VI-15

## Misia at the Piano in the Attic at Valvins

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 14.7 × 11 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alfred Vallotton, Paris – E. J. Van Wisselingh, Amsterdam, c. 1971 – S. Simkin, Winnipeg (Manitoba) – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas, Paris, c. 1985 – Galerie Berès, Paris, 1987 – Galerie Bellier, Paris – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Amsterdam, Van Wisselingh, 1971, no. 39 – Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 112.

**Description:** *A three-quarter view of a piano, its lustrous surface reflecting the chequered light streaming through a closed window. Dark-blue wall with framed pictures. Green and yellow accents throughout. A rough sketch. (AC)*



VI-16

# VI-16

## Intimité. Cipa in Bed at Valvins

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 41.5 × 27 cm  
Signed, upper right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 19 June 1934, lot 83 [*Intimité*] – A. Bergaud, Paris, 12,000 F – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 12 Dec. 1935, lot 29 (ill.) – Fernand Javal, Paris, 1,500 F – Seized by the Nazis during the Second World War – Returned – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – John Barrow, Great Britain, 1949 – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – The Hon. Mrs A. E. Pleydell-Bouverie, London, 1960 – Marlborough-Gerson, New York, after 1963 – Paul Mellon Collection, Upperville (Virginia) – Private collection, United States.

**Exhibitions:** London, Tate Gallery, 1963, no. 158 – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1966, no. 184 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** *Répertoire des biens spoliés en France* 1947, p. 171, no. 3827 (ill.).

# VI-17

## Cipa in Bed

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 22 × 16 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Misia Natanson, Paris – Lefevre, London, 1952 – Sir Nicolas Sekers, Great Britain, 1953 – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 8 July 1971, lot 38 (ill.) – Jan Krugier, Geneva – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** London, Lefevre, 1953, no. 16.

**Bibliography:** *The Listener*, 2 July 1953, p. 24 (ill.).



VI-17



VI-18

# VI-18

## Cipa Asleep in Bed

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 14 × 17 cm  
Signed and dedicated, lower right: *à Cipa / E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Cipa Godebski, Paris; Jean Godebski, Nîmes (France) – Sale, Christie's, London, 5 July 1963, lot 61 (ill.) – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Anthony Samuel, London, 1969 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** London, Tooth & Sons, Nov. 1963, no. 22 (ill.); and April-May 1969, no. 27 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** *The Burlington Magazine* 105, no. 723, June 1963, p. XII (ill.).





VI-19

### VI-19 The Arbour

c. 1896  
Oil on cardboard, 23 × 33 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris – Gimpel Fils, London – Stanley S. Snel-lenburg, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) – Sale, Christie's, New York, 6 Nov. 1979, lot 25 (col. ill.), bought in – Juan Alvarez de Toledo, United States – Sale, Christie's, New York, 12 Nov. 1985, lot 24 (col. ill.), bought in – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Philadelphia, Museum of Art, Oct.-Nov. 1963, p. 35 – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 28 (col. ill.).

**Description:** Against the backdrop of a brightly lit garden shading into orange towards the centre and punctuated with sharp blue inflections, stands a spreading green tree supported by a parasol-prop in a more softly coloured foreground. A wrought-iron fence bisects the composition horizontally. (AC)

### VI-20 Birch Trees

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 19 × 26 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art,  
University of Oklahoma, Norman  
(Oklahoma), 2000.013.029



VI-20



VI-21

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – David Findlay, New York, 1958 – Aaron M. and Clara Weitzenhoffer, Oklahoma City, c. 1979 – Weitzenhoffer bequest to The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, Norman, 2000.

**Description:** A bend in a road overlooking a valley, with large mauve and blue birch trees standing out against a silvery blue sky. A strong decorative effect. (AC)

### VI-21 Road Skirting a Forest

c. 1896  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 40 × 50 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Great Britain

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Roland, Browse & Delbanco, London – Fischer Fine Art, London – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 4 July 1979, lot 318 (ill.) – Thomas Gibson Fine Art, London – Thomas and Anthea Gibson collection, London.

**Exhibitions:** London, Roland, Browse & Delbanco, 1962, no. 30 – London, Fischer Fine Art, 1972, no. 71 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A road consisting of two horizontal ochre-yellow bands, one darker than the other. A pale heap of sand. Background of dark-green foliage, with lighter tree trunks and large black patches flecked with white. A red poppy stands out on the left, striking a particularly vivid note given the extreme simplicity of the composition. (AC)

### VI-22 Landscape

c. 1896  
Oil on cardboard, 17.5 × 20 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Mouradian et Vallotton, Paris – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1978-79 (not in cat).

**Description:** A strip of ultramarine blue sky, and a strange light filtering through the leaves of a row of trees, introducing a broad patch of pink into the blue of the surrounding shadows. (AC)



VI-22

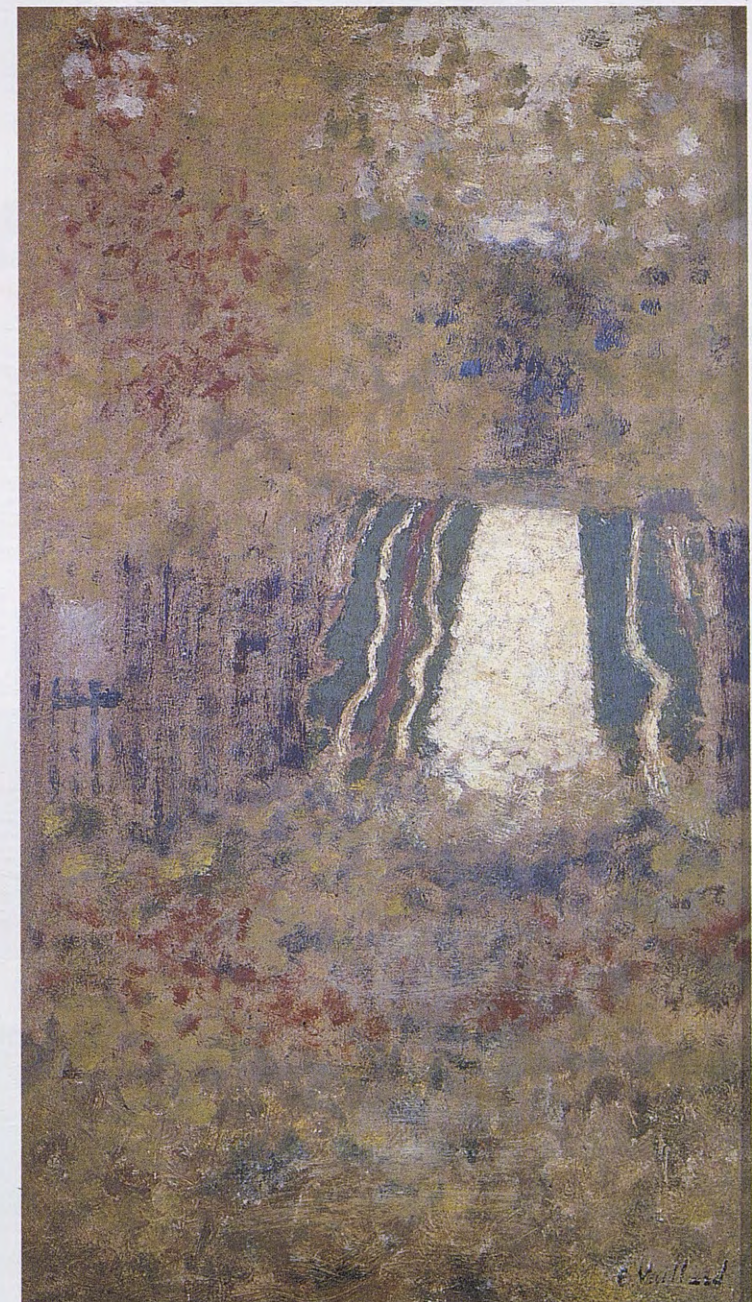
### VI-23 Hillside View

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 39 × 22.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim,  
Mannheim (Germany), M2226

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Private collection, 1982 – Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim.

**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Vallotton, 1981-82, no. 59.

**Description:** Amid foliage dotted with brown highlights can be seen a small gate to the left and a sort of carpet of white stripes to the right. The subject is difficult to make out. (AC)



VI-23





VI-24

# VI-24

## View of Valvins

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 14 × 40 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. V.*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Marcel Guérin, Paris; Guillaume Guérin, Sanary (France) – E. J. Van Wisselingh, Amsterdam – Mme Jourdan, Paris – Private collection, France – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 28 Nov. 1995, lot 186 (col. ill.), bought in – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Berès, May 1957, no. 71; and 1990, no. 118 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Nectoux 1998, pp. 128-132, 131 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *Behind a hedge of leafless brown branches, a group of greyish houses with dark-green roofs and red dormer-windows under a slate-blue sky.* (JS)

# VI-25

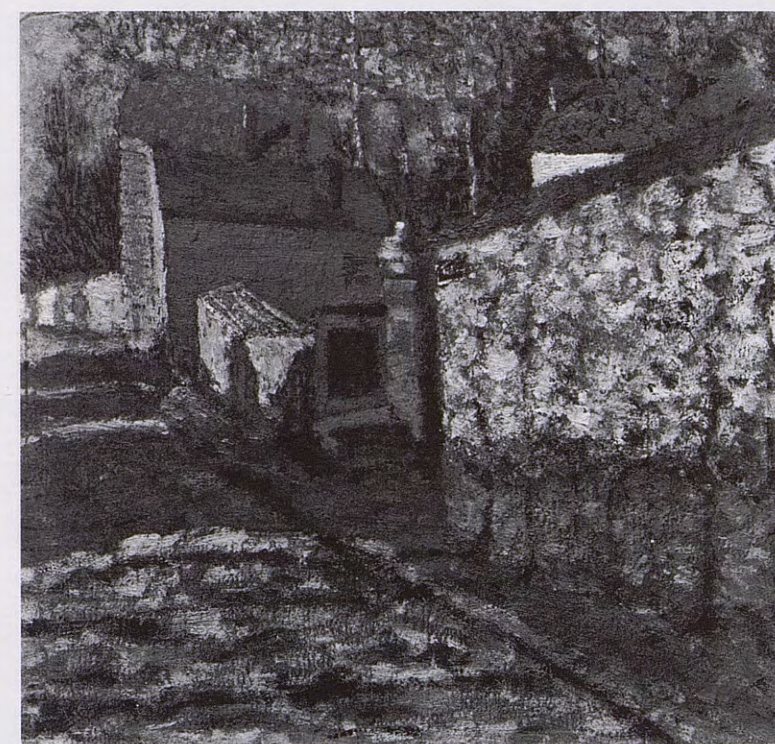
## Houses at Valvins

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 18.5 × 39.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Samuel G. Archibald, Montreal (Quebec) – Archibald sale, Sotheby's, New York, 15 Feb. 1951, lot 35 (ill.) – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Mrs Margaret Thompson-Biddle, Paris – Mrs Thompson-Biddle sale, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 14 June 1957, lot 43 (ill.) – Private collection, Paris.



VI-25



VI-26

# VI-26

## Sunlit Road, Valvins

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 20.5 × 22 cm  
Stamp 3, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 6 April 1960, lot 281 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 14 Dec. 1960, lot 294 (ill.) – Lefevre, London – Sir Anthony Hornby, London, 1961 – Private collection.

# VI-27

## The Blue Cypress

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 26 × 30 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection; Great Britain

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Martin Fabiani, Paris, 1942 – Galerie Berès, Paris – Private collection, Great Britain, 1978.

**Description:** *A bend in a road in front of a wall, with, to the left, a gate set between brickwork pillars and, beyond the gate, two yellow poplars. In the foreground are two large heaps of fallen, bronze-coloured leaves and a brown boundary stone. Near the centre of the composition is a ragged blue cypress, and, in the distance, some red roofs flanked by trees can be seen on the right. Cloudy sky.* (AC)



VI-27

# VI-28

## House with a Red Roof

1896  
Oil on wood, 25 × 27 cm  
Stamp 2, lower right  
Private collection, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Captain Richard A. Peto, Isle of Wight (Great Britain), 1947 – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – John Barrow, Great Britain, 1948 – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Private collection, London.



VI-28





VI-29



VI-30

### VI-29 The Banks of the Seine at Valvins

1896  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
panel, 15.5 × 32.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968,  
no. 33 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 59 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1945, p. 33.

**Description:** A hill and some tiny houses under a grey  
sky, reflected in precise detail in the surface of a river.  
(JS)

### VI-30 Bathing

1896  
Oil on cardboard, 14.5 × 37.3 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris –  
Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne,  
1955, no. 37 [*La Baignade à Villeneuve-sur-Yonne*]



VI-31

and Cipa Godebski, and, in the foreground, Misia and  
the buttocks of Toulouse-Lautrec. Grey-blue composi-  
tion, with a green strip of riverbank in the back-  
ground. (AC)

### VI-31 Misia at the Piano

c. 1896  
Oil on cardboard, 26 × 25 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art,  
New York, The Robert Lehman Collection,  
1975.1.224

**Provenance:** Hermann-Paul, Paris – Sale, Galerie  
Charpentier, Paris, 10 June 1953, lot 131 – André  
Weil, Paris – Robert Lehman, New York, 1953 –  
Lehman bequest to The Metropolitan Museum of  
Art, New York, 1975.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 57 –  
Cincinnati, Art Museum, 1959, no. 172 (ill.) – New  
York, Bronx County Courthouse, 1974, no. 17 –  
Oklahoma City, Museum of Art, 1983, pp. 88, 89  
(col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Szabo 1975, p. 95, col. pl. 102 – Ciaf-  
fa 1985, pp. 322-323, 325, fig. 177 – Easton 1989,  
pp. 124-125.

– Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 38 – Albi, Musée  
Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 25 – Paris, Maeght,  
1966, no. 57 – Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 132.

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1945, p. 33.

**Description:** Six bathers around a rowing-boat. On  
the right can be seen Kerr-Xavier Roussel (in the boat)

### VI-32 Interior with Three Figures, known as Conversation

c. 1896  
Oil on wood, 46 × 26 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Bern-  
heim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 9245, *Conversation*),  
31 March 1899, 250 F – Jack Aghion, Paris, 1899

– Aghion sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 29 March  
1918, lot 26 (ill.), 2,650 F – E. Richard Bühler,  
Winterthur (Switzerland) – Dr. Georg Herold,  
Zurich (Switzerland), 1940 – Doris Epstein-  
Mayer, Zurich – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibitions:** Zurich, Kunsthau, 1943, no. 725 –  
Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 29 [*Intérieur*, c. 1900]  
– Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 171 – Hamburg-  
Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 12 (ill.) – Houston-  
Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 91.

**Bibliography:** Easton 1989, pp. 124-125, col. fig.  
91.



VI-33

### VI-33 Woman in an Armchair (study)

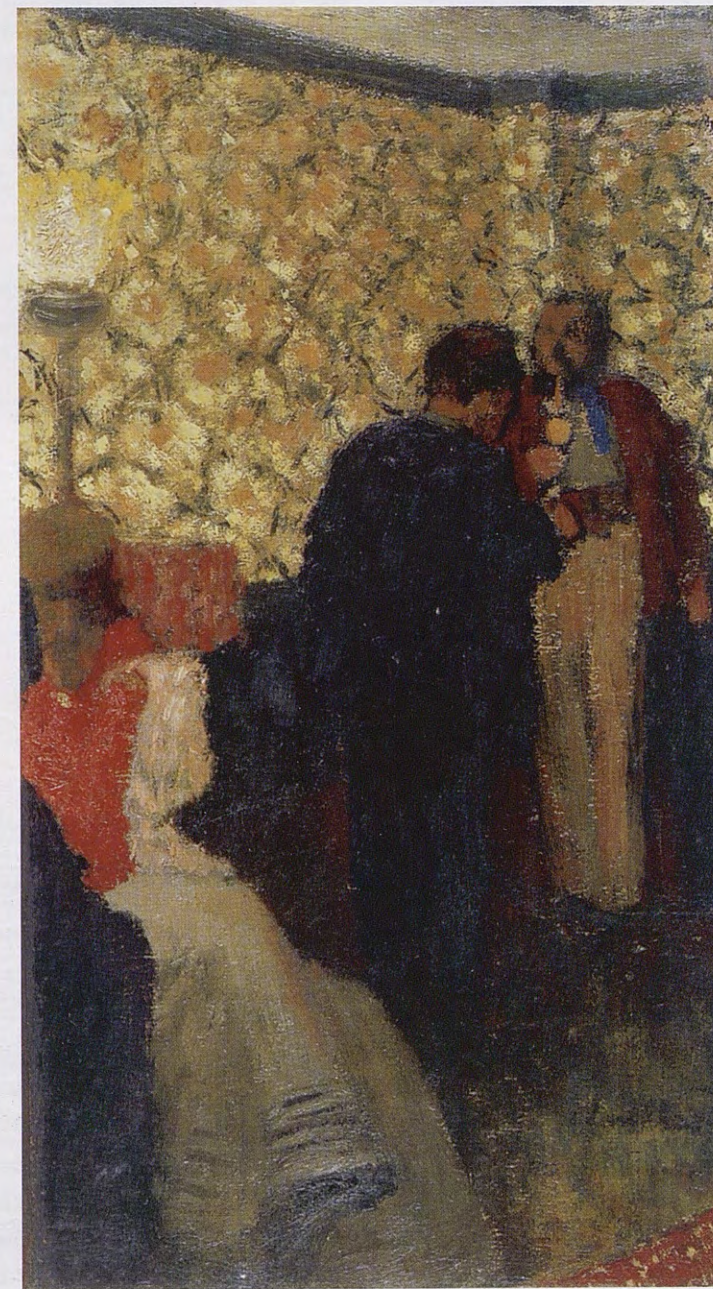
1896  
Oil on cardboard, 30 × 26 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Misia Natanson, Paris – Comte Jean  
Godebski, Nîmes (France) – Sale, Christie's, Lon-  
don, 5 July 1963, lot 62 (ill.) – Dr. Olof Forss-  
man, Borås (Sweden) – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938,  
no. 44 [*Madame Sert Godebska*].

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 83 – *The  
Burlington Magazine* 105, no. 723, June 1963,  
p. XII (ill.) – *Apollo* 78, no. 19, Sept. 1963, p. 245  
(ill.) – *The Connoisseur* 154, no. 619, Sept. 1963,  
p. 48 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 42 – Charles-  
Roux 1979, p. 146 (ill.) – Charles-Roux 1980,  
p. 13 (col. ill.) – Ciaffa 1985, p. 329, fig. 186.

**Description:** The sitter is shown full-face, her brown  
hair gathered up in a 'brioche' or bun. The left side  
of her face, coloured white, her pink cheekbones and  
her crimson lips contrast with the barely painted card-  
board support. Heavy brown lines accentuate the eye-  
brows and chin. The same pinkish white is delicately  
used to suggest her neck and her blouse, which is  
trimmed with a black bow. (JS)



VI-32





VI-34

### VI-34 Woman in an Armchair

1896  
Oil on paper, mounted on canvas,  
105 x 74 cm [12.5 cm removed from base  
by Sam Salz, New York]  
Inscribed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Donated by the artist in an auction in aid of a subscription for a monument to Cézanne, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 22 May 1911, lot 21 [*La Femme au fauteuil*] (ill.) – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, (stock no. 18767), 2,530 F – Gaston Bernheim de Villers, Paris, 3 Jan. 1913, 2,530 F – Sam Salz, New York, after 1948 – Nate B. Spingold, New York, c. 1954 –

Donation to The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1957; sale, 1987 – E. V. Thaw, New York – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1913 (not in cat.) – Paris, Petit Palais, 1937, no. 24 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 38 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 51 (col. ill.), 102 [*Misia and Thadée Natanson*] – Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1957 – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1958, p. 51 – New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, June 1960 – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 15 (ill.) – New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1967, no. 109 – New York-Philadelphia, 1971, no. 140 (ill.) – New York, Wildenstein, 1972, no. 69 (ill.) – Rochester, Memorial Art Gallery, 1984, no. 78 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** *La Vie*, no. 2, 15 Jan. 1914 (ill.) – *Life* 37, no. 18, 1 Nov. 1954, p. 78 (col. ill.) – Barr

1958 – *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* 26, no. 1, 1958, p. 51 (ill.) – Huisman 1963, p. 63 (col. ill.) – *Pictures on Exhibit* 38, no. 2, Nov. 1964, p. 5 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1968, col. pl. 6 – Preston 1971, pp. 92, 93 (col. ill.) – Gold and Fizzdale 1980, p. 114 (col. ill.) – Oakley 1981, p. 10, col. pl. 7 – Georges 1982, p. 72 – Daniel 1984, pp. 86, 89, fig. 24 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 255-257, fig. 123 – Easton 1989, pp. 108-110, 113, 125, col. fig. 79 – Makarius 1989, pp. 19, 22 (col. ill.) – Dumas, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, p. 76 (col. ill.) – Bernier 1991, p. 68 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, p. 94, col. fig. 161.

**Description:** Against the brilliantly lit backdrop of bright-yellow wallpaper with green motifs, Misia is seated in an armchair upholstered in a pale green and orange fabric, in front of a grand piano over which a dark-red covering with pale designs is draped. She wears a pink pleated dress, its silk shimmering with exquisite hues; her blouse is adorned with a black velvet bow. Her fair hair is well groomed; her expressive face blends into the shadow on the right. Thadée Natanson is shown in profile on the right, standing with his arms propped on the end of the piano. His face is blurred with scratch marks made with the handle of the brush. There are two dogs on the floor; one is tawny and stands, the other shades into the blue pattern of the rug. It was Vuillard who gave this picture its title, *Woman in an Armchair*. (JS)

'Even when the men are present, Misia dominates the pictures of her salon.'<sup>1</sup> The dark-



E. V., preparatory drawing for *Woman in an Armchair*, graphite on paper, 13.9 x 10.9 cm. Private collection.

red cloth protecting the piano separates Misia from Thadée, who is dimly visible on the far right; he does not even appear in the preparatory drawing, where Misia's face is shown in profile (see ill.). The light reverberates through the sleeves and bodice of her dress, which stand out sharply against the vibrant floral pattern of the piano covering. The pearly white silk, highlighted with subtle pink accents, is worthy of the finest portraits of women by Manet or Degas. And no colour shows Misia's beauty to better advantage than white. Let us recall that when, very much later (1929), she received Diaghilev's dying confessions at the

Hotel Lido in Venice, the Russian impresario implored her: 'Misia... promise me that you will always wear white... it is in white that I have always liked you best...' <sup>2</sup> *Woman in an Armchair* is a supremely musical composition, more musical than any of Vuillard's paintings of Misia actually playing the piano. The sitter appears to be slowly surrendering to an ecstatic happiness, the sparkling expression of what she hears in her inner ear. Like Madame Vuillard portrayed busy in her kitchen or absorbed in sewing, she is surrounded by objects which symbolise her and with which she is one, for they are borne along by the same movement as the one that runs through her thoughts. The picture-space is mobile, fluid, malleable; it brims with the echo of a vanished music the memory of which continues to envelop her. In a way, Vuillard comes closer than ever here to what certain pieces of music by Debussy intimate: in essence sound – the purest sound – is but the *memory* of sound.

<sup>1</sup> Easton 1989, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Sert 1952, p. 228.

### VI-35 Interior, Blue and Yellow Harmony

c. 1897  
Pastel on paper, 61 x 61 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 12 Oct. 1988, lot 27 (col. ill.) – Sale, Christie's, London, 28 Nov. 1989, lot 121 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

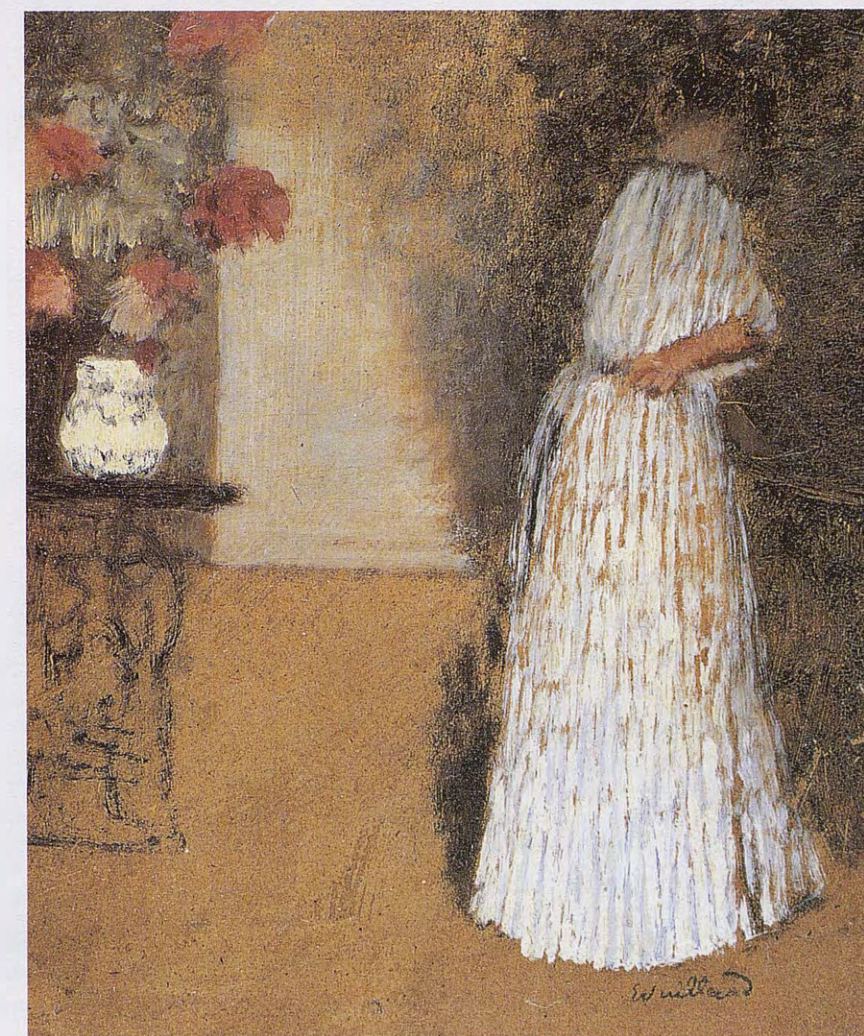
### VI-36 Young Woman in a White Dress

c. 1897  
Oil on cardboard, 29.5 x 23.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: *EVuillard*  
Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (Russia), No. 3KP 539

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Collection Otto Krebs, Holzdorf (Germany) – Seized by the Nazis during the Second World War – Seized by the Russians at the end of the war – Hermitage Museum, Leningrad.



VI-35



VI-36





VI-37

# VI-37 Woman in Blue with a Bowl of Fruit

c. 1897  
Pastel on paper, 24.5 × 16.7 cm  
Stamp 5, lower right  
Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson estate sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 27 Nov. 1953, lot 70 – Monsieur G., France – Collection de Monsieur G. sale, Hôtel George V, Paris, 21 June 1995, lot 1 (col. ill.) – Private collection, Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France).

**Exhibition:** Brussels, [La Libre Esthétique], 1909, no. 282.

# VI-38 Cipa Listening to Misia Playing the Piano

1897-98  
Oil on cardboard, 63.5 × 56 cm  
Signed, upper right: *E Vuillard*  
Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe  
(Germany), Inv. 2520

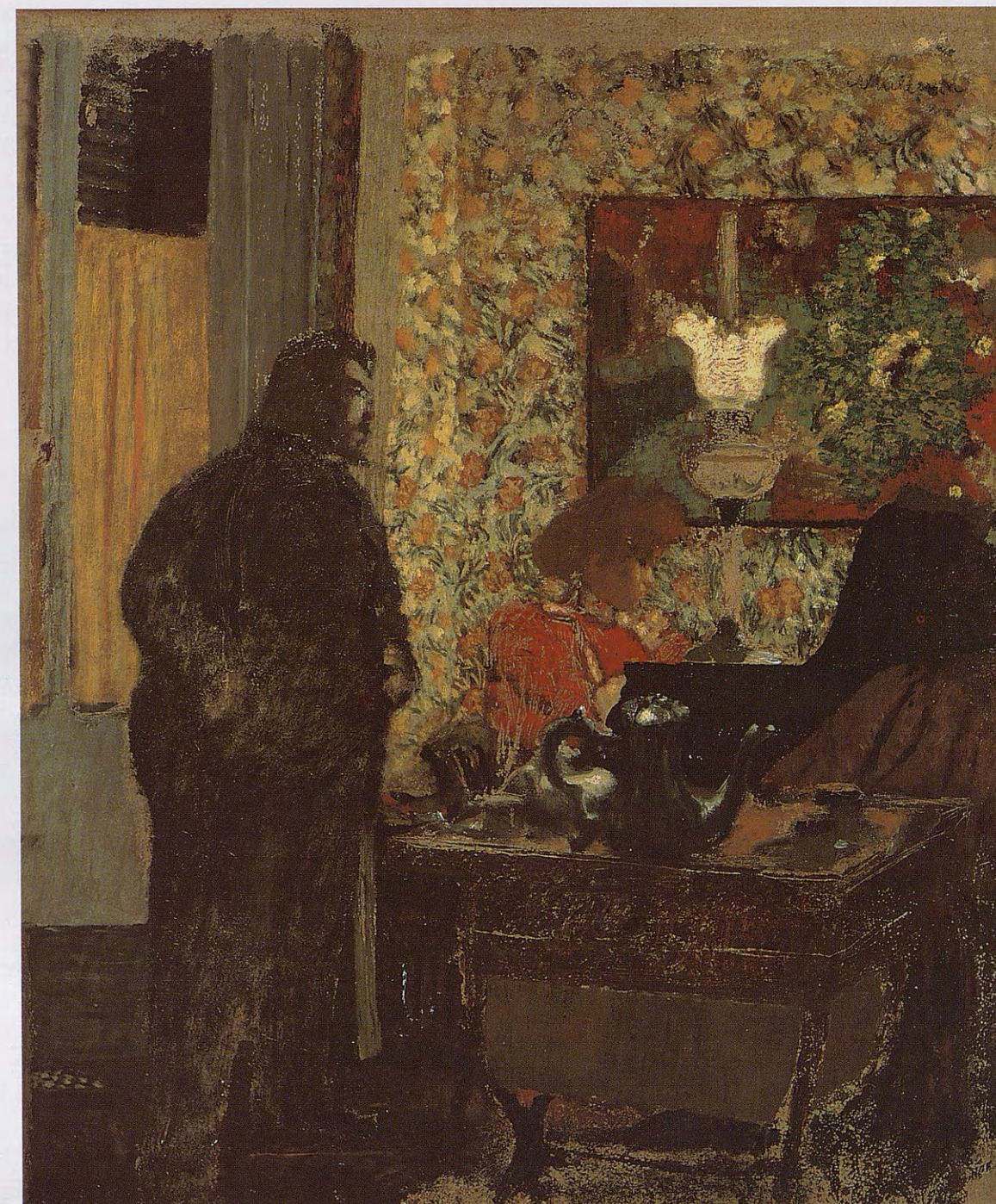
**Provenance:** M.C. Hoogendijk, The Hague – Hoogendijk sale, Frederick Muller Gallery, Amsterdam, 21-22 May 1912, no. 62 (ill.) – Martin Fabiani, Paris – Lefevre, London, 1949 – Lt. Col. R. C. Pritchard, London, 1950 – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London, 1952 – Sir Alexander Korda, London – Korda sale, Sotheby's, London, 14 June 1962, lot 33 (col. ill.) – O'Hana, London and Marlborough, London – Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe, 1965.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Vollard, 1898 – London, Lefevre, 1949, no. 74 – London, Royal Academy, 1951, no. 31 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 56 (ill.), 102 – London, Marlborough, 1963, no. 40 (col. ill.) – London, O'Hana, 1963, no. 58 (ill.) – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-64, no. 310 (col. ill.) – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 29 (ill.) – London, O'Hana, 1964, no. 43 (col. ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 45 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 73 (ill.) – Lyons, 1990, no. 68, pp. 77-78 (col. ill.) – Chicago-New York, 2001, no. 40, p. 133 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1961, p. 56 (ill.) – *The Burlington Magazine* 104, no. 710, May 1962, p. v (ill.) – Huisman 1963, p. 62 (ill.) – Lauts 1966, pp. 143 (ill.), 213-214 – *GBA* 67, supplement, no. 1165, Feb. 1966, p. 21 (ill.), no. 86 – Hamilton 1967, pp. 31b (ill.), 65 – Salomon 1968, pp. 76, 77 (col. ill.) – Lauts and Zimmerman 1971-72, no. 2520 – London, Lefevre, 1976, p. 105 (ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 72 – Daniel 1984, p. 81, fig. 21 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 324-329, fig. 179 – Easton 1989, pp. 117-118, 125, col. fig. 89 – Makarius 1989, pp. 19, 60, 61 (col. ill.) – Rishel, travelling exhib. cat., United States, 1989-91, p. 112, fig. 171 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 59 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, pp. 87, 101, col. fig. 148; and exhib. cat. Chicago-New York, 2001, pp. 132, 133 (col. ill.).

**Description:** *Clad in a bright red blouse, Misia is viewed in profile, seated at her piano before the floral-papered wall. Hanging on the wall is Vuillard's The Album (V-96.2), against which the yellow tulip-like shade of the oil lamp that illuminates the scene stands out sharply. To the left is the dark silhouette of Misia's half-brother, Cipa, standing with his hands in his jacket pockets, as though listening to her play. His back is turned to the closed window; the wooden slats of the shutter lit up by the lamp are visible above the curtains. In the foreground is a sewing-table, with a large metal teapot and some cups on a tray. (JS)*

Misia's half-brother Cipa was a friend of Ravel, who in 1908 composed *Ma mère l'Oye* for Cipa's two children, Mimi and Jean. *The Album* (V-96.2), painted some time earlier for Thadée, is clearly recognizable on the wall. It is more than ever apparent here that Vuillard has moved on from the fatalistic compositions of his youth, in which the dramas of everyday life would be conjured up with savage concision. What we now see is a vibrant assemblage of superimposed planes, rendered even more impressive by subtle adjustments in focus. Consider, for example, the huge, backlit coffee pot that bulges out at us, while the main source of light shining down on the scene



VI-38

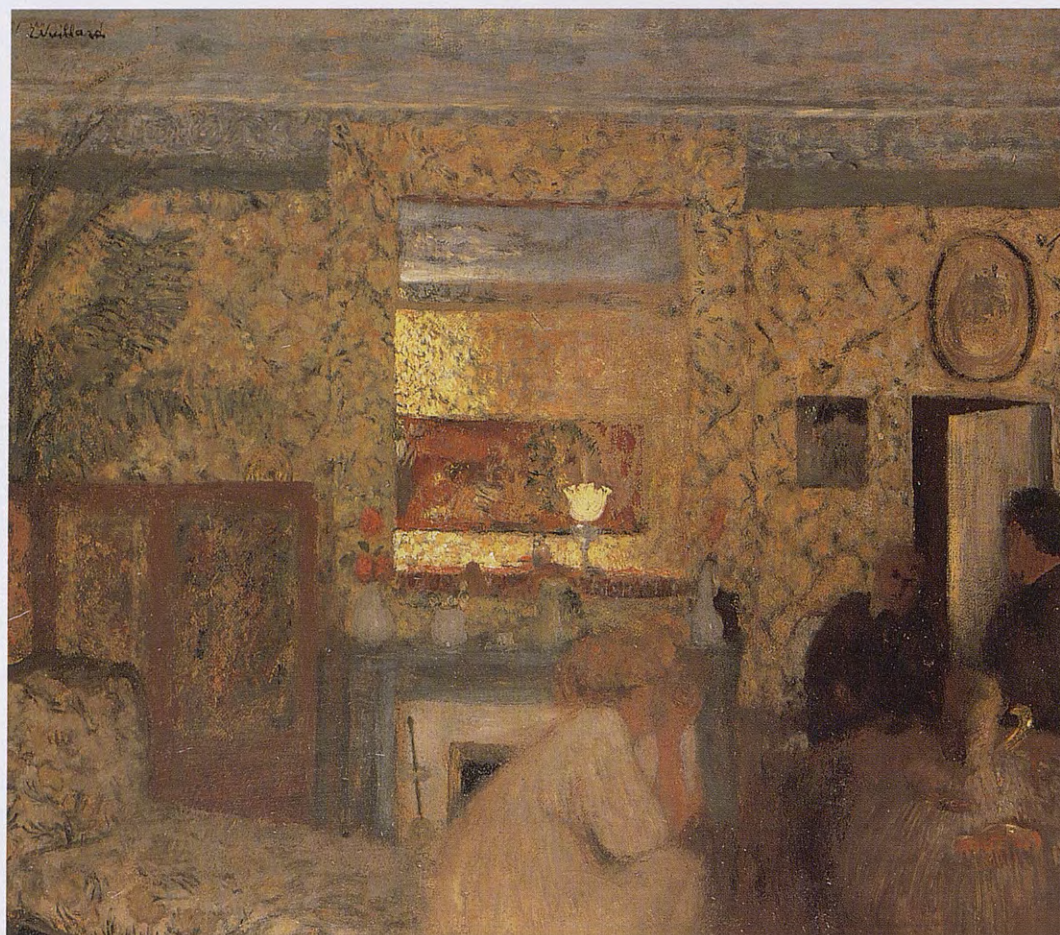
appears to quicken the vibration of the colours on the wallpaper behind it. The streaks in Misia's red blouse have been scored with the handle of the brush. The artist's manner of representing soft-lit interiors filled with music is always sophisticated, but here it is something more than that: *Cipa Listening to Misia Playing the Piano* brims with joy, a delight in the free will of aesthetic choice, a verve springing from the sheer pleasure of painting. Its textures seemingly unified by sound, it endures as a splendid image of absorption in beau-



Félix Vallotton, *The Symphony*, 1897, xylograph. Private collection.

ty. In one of Félix Vallotton's most celebrated woodcuts, *The Symphony* (see ill.) – a work that dates from precisely the same period – Misia is depicted in her drawing-room (instantly recognizable by the shape of the oil lamp on the piano and the pattern of the wallpaper in the background). The audience, which includes the pianist Alfred Cortot, identifiable by his monocle and moustache, seems mesmerised by Misia's playing. Vuillard himself stands at the back, listening religiously with eyes closed.





VI-39

### VI-39 The Natansons' Drawing-Room, Rue Saint-Florentin

1897-98  
Oil on paper, mounted on cradled panel,  
45.5 x 51.5 cm  
Signed, upper left: *E Vuillard*  
Stiftung Sammlung E.G. Bührle, Zurich  
(Switzerland)

**Provenance:** Paul Gallimard, Paris, 1898 – Art market, Paris – Emil Georg Bührle, Zurich (Switzerland), 1952; Stiftung Sammlung E. G. Bührle, Zurich.

**Exhibitions:** Winterthur, Kunstmuseum, June-July 1955, no. 207 – Berlin, Nationalgalerie, 1958, no. 62 (col. ill.) – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1958, no. 265 (col. ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1958-59, no. 171 – Edinburgh-London, 1961, no. 67 – Zurich, 1964, no. 140 – Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 27, p. 98 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Zurich, Bührle, 1971, p. 18, no. 114; and 1973, p. 246, no. 104 (col. ill.) – Easton 1989, p. 117, fig. 88 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 62 (col. ill.).

More than in any other composition by Vuillard, the *reflected* image is the subject here. This depiction of the Natansons' drawing-room creates the same impression that we nowadays get when glimpsing a fragment of landscape in the rear-view mirror of a car – in other words, the collage effect of a landscape *moving towards us* while framing another, smaller landscape *receding* into infinity. In Vuillard's mirror, we recognise Misia's piano, covered with a red cloth, and the lamp on top of it lighting up *The Album* (VI-96.2); there is in all likelihood another



E. V., preparatory drawing for *The Natansons' Drawing-Room*, graphite on paper, 10.6 x 13.8 cm. Private collection.

er source of light 'out of frame' to the right of the piano. With its figures and furnishings (including the 'duchesse' couch, the screen, the enamelware vases on the mantelpiece), the room functions like a frame, its diffuse semi-darkness offsetting the burst of dazzling light in the mirror.

Vuillard's poetry of snug interiors, in which each object generates a hermetic dizziness and where the picture surface seems to vibrate with a suspended musical note, has no equal save the work of the Belgian Symbolist, Fernand Khnopff. Khnopff's *Listening to Schumann* (see ill.) bears a marked resemblance to many of Vuillard's pictures



Fernand Khnopff, *Listening to Schumann*, 1893, oil on canvas. Musée Royal des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.

of the Natanson salon. Both artists are graced with a feel for 'the next to nothing' ('*le presque rien*'); in both we find the same genius for expressing 'the visible concealed' ('*le visible dissimulé*') that Maurice Merleau-Ponty was later to encapsulate in his memorable dictum, 'The surface of the visible is lined throughout with an invisible reserve.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Le Visible et l'invisible*, Paris: Gallimard, 1964.

### VI-40 The Alexandre Natanson Family, Rue Saint-Florentin

1897-98  
Oil on cardboard, 26 x 40 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Jules Strauss, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 10634), 14 May 1900, 350 F – Heinrich Thannhauser, Munich, 23 Feb. 1909, 700 F – Arthur Hahnloser, Winterthur (Switzerland), 1910; Hedy Hahnloser-Bühler, Winterthur; Lisa Jäggi-Hahnloser, Winterthur – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 32 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 168 [*La Famille*, c. 1902] – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 187 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 200 [*La Famille*] – Zurich, 1964, no. 141 – Winterthur, Kunstmuseum, 1973, no. 283 – Lyons-Barcelona, 1990-91, no. 73, p. 164 (col. ill.) – Winterthur, Villa Flora, 1995-97, no. 94, p. 77 (col. ill.); and 1999-2000, no. 38.

**Description:** A couple seated on the right – the woman is wearing a pleated blouse with leg-of-mutton sleeves and a black skirt – are gazing at their two young daughters, one of whom is standing on the left, in front of a fireplace, while the other is seated in the right foreground, sewing. (JS)

The figures are seen as it were through a haze, while the foreground is wholly lacking in definition. Alexandre and Olga Natanson are recognisable on the right, and a young woman is bending down over the hearth. Note the magnificent 'scratch-work' of the blouse, clearly designed to render the kind of ruffled fabric commonplace in women's fashions around 1895. This technique of incising the pigment with a spatula is used to create the same effect in *The Widow's Visit* (VII-13).

### VI-41 The Red Housecoat

1898  
Oil on cardboard, 42 x 63 cm  
Signed, lower right: *Vuillard*  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 15700), 18 Feb. 1907, 450 F – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland), 31 Dec.



VI-40



VI-41

1919 – Arthur Hahnloser, Winterthur (Switzerland); Hedy Hahnloser-Bühler, Winterthur; Hans R. Hahnloser, Berne – Private collection, Switzerland.

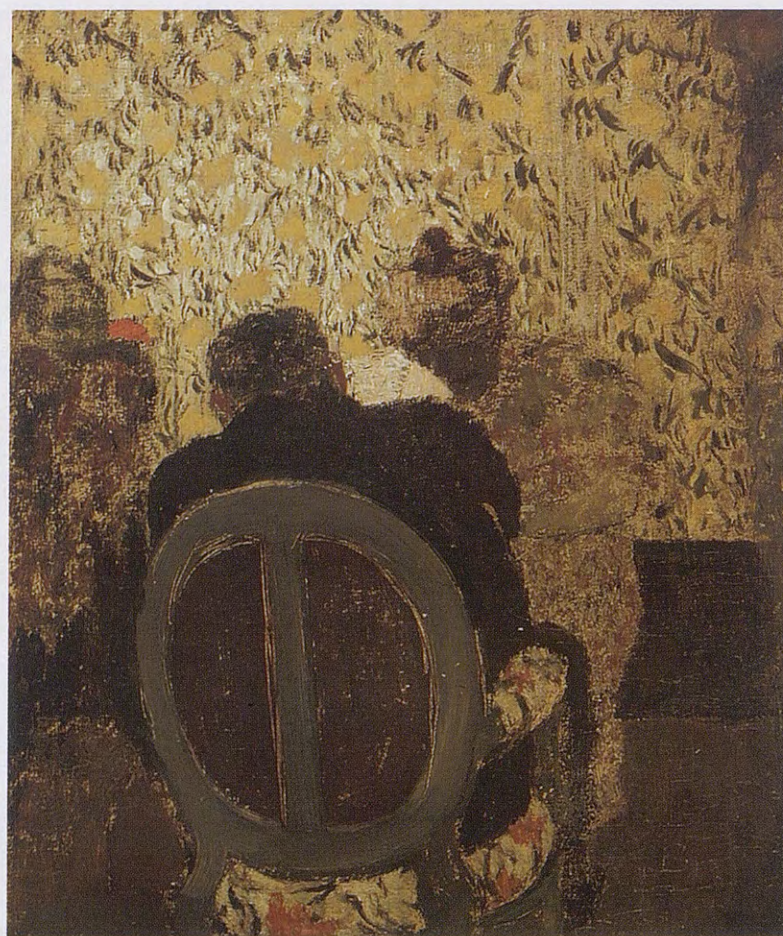
**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 34 – Winterthur, Kunstmuseum, 1916, no. 194 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1917, no. 125 – Zurich, Kunsthau, 1927, no. 252; and 1932, no. 132 [*Le Peignoir rouge*, 1896-98] – La Chaux-de-Fonds, Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 33 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 167 [*Le Peignoir rouge*, c. 1905] – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 180 [*Femme rouge sur des coussins*] – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1952, no. 112; and 1955, no. 42 [*Misia Godebska et son frère*] – Winterthur, Kunstmuseum, 1973, no. 282 (ill.) – Zurich-Bremen-Bielefeld, 1982-83, no. 174 (col. ill.) – Hous-

ton-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 93 (col. ill.) – Winterthur, Villa Flora, 1999-2000, no. 39, p. 21 (col. ill.) – Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 32, p. 101 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Warnod 1988, p. 49 (col. ill.) – Easton 1989, p. 126 – Makarius 1989, p. 23 (col. ill.) – Bernier 1991, p. 66 (col. ill.) – Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Winterthur, 1999-2000, pp. 19-20.

**Description:** A young woman in the foreground is viewed from behind as she reclines on her elbow at the foot of a couch. The folds of her dress have been scratched in with a penknife. Cipa Godebski, his foot resting on a stool by the fireplace, is seated full-face on the right. (JS)





VI-42

### VI-42 The Manicure

c. 1898

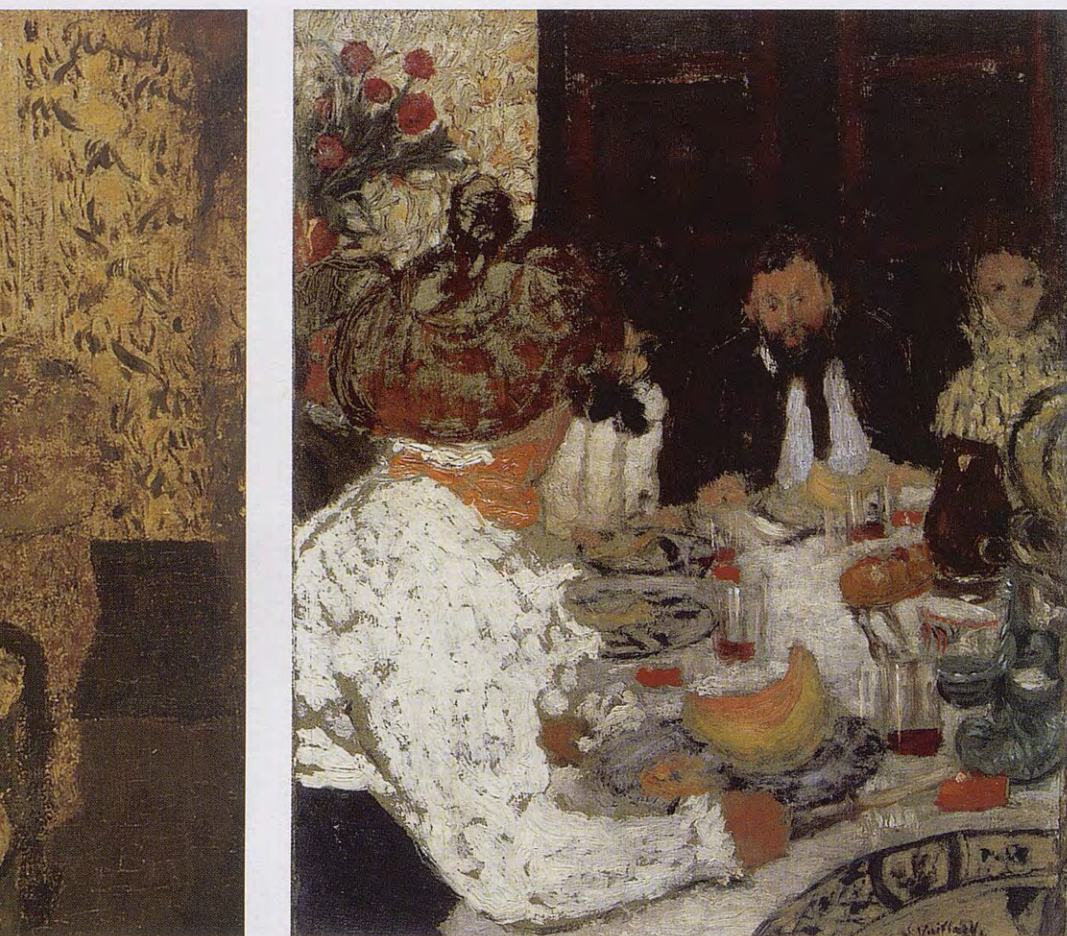
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 35.5 x 30 cm

Signed, upper left: *E Vuillard*  
Southampton City Art Gallery,  
Southampton (Great Britain),  
Chipperfield Fund with 50%

Government Grant through the Victoria  
and Albert Museum, Acc. no. 2/1968

**Provenance:** V. Goloubeff, Paris – Arthur Tooth  
& Sons, London – Odo Cross and Angus Wil-  
son, London, 1944; on loan to the Southampton  
City Art Gallery, from Sept. 1951 to June 1961  
– Sale, Sotheby's, London, 31 March 1965, lot 80  
(col. ill.), bought in – Arthur Tooth & Sons, Lon-  
don – Purchased by the Southampton City Art  
Gallery, Southampton, 1968.

**Exhibitions:** Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy,  
1948, no. 87 – London, Wildenstein, June 1948,  
no. 28 – London, Tooth & Sons, May-June 1968,  
no. 20 (ill.) – London, Wildenstein, 1970,  
no. 32 (ill.) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago,  
1971-72, no. 38 (ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Ams-  
terdam, 1991-92, no. 27, p. 60 (col. ill.).



VI-43

**Bibliography:** Georges 1982, p. 73 – Daniel 1984,  
p. 134, fig. 48.

**Description:** A man seen from behind – probably  
*Thadée Natanson* – is seated in an oval-back arm-  
chair opposite a wall decorated with yellow and black  
designs. The light from a lamp concealed by his pow-  
erful silhouette falls with particular emphasis on the  
shoulder of the young woman in a green dress fac-  
ing him. A sketchy figure can be made out dimly on  
the left, with perhaps another one on the right. (JS)

### VI-43 Lunch

c. 1898

Oil on cardboard, 40 x 35.1 cm

Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*

Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven  
(Connecticut), The Katharine Ordway  
Collection, Acc. 1980.12.17

**Provenance:** H. Taeubler, United States; on loan  
to the Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield (Massa-  
chusetts), from 1941 to 1946 – Katharine Ord-  
way, New York, 1948 – Yale University Art Gallery,  
New Haven, 1980.

**Exhibitions:** Springfield, Museum of Fine Arts,  
1934-35, no. 54 – New York, Seligmann, 1948,  
no. 9 (ill.) – New Haven, Yale, 1980, no. 4 –  
Rochester, Memorial Art Gallery, 1984, no. 77  
(ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn,  
1989-90, no. 80 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Makarius 1989, p. 29 (col. ill.) –  
Bernier 1991, p. 65 (col. ill.).

**Description:** In the left foreground is Misia in a pale  
blouse, her hair done up in a chignon and her face  
turned towards the other diners seated around the  
table. A bearded man appears to be posing with a  
dreamy expression in his eyes, between two women  
depicted against a dark wall. A bouquet of flowers  
stands out against a light background in the top left  
corner. (JS)



VI-44

### VI-44 Rue Saint-Florentin, the Drawing-Room with Three Lamps

1899

Glue-based distemper on paper, mounted  
on canvas, 59 x 95 cm

Signed and dated, lower right:

*E Vuillard 99*

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 2000-26

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Bernheim-  
Jeune, Paris (stock no. 10101), 23 Dec. 1899, 700 F  
– Josse Bernheim, Paris – Gustav Zumsteg, Zurich  
(Switzerland), c. 1949 – Sale, Christie's, London,  
30 Nov. 1992, lot 20 (col. ill.) – Private collection  
– Musée d'Orsay, Paris, anonymous gift subject to  
usufruct.

**Exhibitions:** Berlin, Secession VII, 1903, no. 200  
– Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 2 – Basle, Kuns-  
thalle, 1949, no. 219 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951,  
no. 181 (ill.) – Paris, Kaganovitch, 1951, no. 53 (ill.)  
– Lausanne, Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 1952  
(not in cat.) – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne,  
1955, no. 196 [Intérieur] – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-  
Arts, 1958, no. 339 (ill.) – Paris, Petit Palais, 1959,  
no. 140 (ill.) – Paris, L'Œil, 1963, no. 8 (ill.) – Lau-  
sanne, Palais de Beaulieu, 1964, no. 155 (ill.) – Paris,  
Maeght, 1966, no. 51 – Paris, Orangerie, 1967,  
no. 141 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968,

no. 44 – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 72 (ill.) – Toron-  
to-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. VI (col. ill.)  
– New York, Wildenstein, 1983, p. 88 – Houston-  
Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90 (col. ill.) –  
Paris, 1993-94, no. 177, p. 103 (col. ill.) – Paris,  
Orsay, 2000, no. 27, col. ill.

**Bibliography:** *Kunst und Künstler*, Feb.-March  
1903, p. 196 (ill.) – Théodore 1938, p. 129 (ill.) –  
Dorival 1957, p. 21 (col. ill.) – Salomon 1961, p. 60  
(col. ill.) – *L'Œil*, no. 100, April 1963, p. 14 (ill.) –  
*Art News* 62, no. 4, summer 1963, p. 45 (ill.) – Jalard  
1966, p. 203 – *Paris Match*, no. 259, 26 August  
1967, p. 42 (col. ill.) – Salomon 1968, p. 78 (col.  
ill.) – Jaffé 1969, p. 309 (col. ill.) – Preston 1971,  
pp. 104, 105 (col. ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toron-  
to-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, pp. 32, 49, 55  
– Gold and Fildale 1980, pp. 39-40 – Georges 1982,

p. 77 – Daniel 1984, p. 216, fig. 74 – Ciaffa 1985,  
p. 219, fig. 95 – Warnod 1988, p. 26 – Easton 1989,  
pp. 109, 125-126 – Bailey and Rishel, travelling  
exhib. cat., United States, 1989-91, p. 112, fig. 168  
– Hahnloser-Ingold 1990, p. 204 – Bernier 1991,  
pp. 46-47 (col. ill.) – Frèches-Thory, exhib. cat., Lon-  
don-Paris, 1991-92, p. 168, fig. 206 – Cogeval  
1993a, p. 68; and 1993b, p. 59 – Groom 1993,  
pp. 81, 83, 89, 90, col. fig. 134 – Koella, exhib. cat.,  
Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 102, col. fig. 20.

This picture gives us an even clearer notion  
of the lay-out of the Natansons' drawing-room  
than do any of the artist's previous depictions  
of it. The door in front of which the pianist's  
half-brother stands in *Cipa Listening to Misia*



E. V., two preparatory  
drawings for *The Drawing-  
Room with Three Lamps*,  
graphite on paper,  
17.6 x 11.1 cm.  
Private collection.



*Playing the Piano* (VI-38) is now placed squarely at the centre of the composition. Misia, Coolus and Thadée are all absorbed in a sort of self-communion suggested by the golden light on the objects, the true protagonists of this picture: 'Nothing seems to exist for its own sake any longer; everything is combined in a scintillating flow of colours that, as Baudelaire said of Delacroix, thinks for itself, as it were, independently of the objects it clothes.'<sup>1</sup> This justly celebrated picture reveals a Vuillard totally free of the Synthetist and Expressionist-like provocations of his youth. The cultural field in which his art was now developing could be seen as a sort of magical triangle between Mallarmé, Proust and Debussy. Many years later, Annette Vaillant was to recall this painting with great wistfulness: 'The rocking-chair that washed up in our apartment, a piece of flotsam from the divorce, and which was later to rock many of our childhood reveries in the entrance hall, is the one in which Vuillard painted my uncle reading his newspaper and sketched Romain Coolus

in the centre of the "Thadées" salon on the rue Saint-Florentin. The drawing-room with its lamps and yellow lampshades, its glittering phoenixes, its grand piano, its rough earthenware pots that Misia gave a new home to on the mantelpiece'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Koella 1993, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Vaillant 1963, p. 14.

## VI-45

### Misia at the Piano

1899

Oil on cardboard, 55 × 80 cm

Signed, upper right: *E. Vuillard*

Private collection

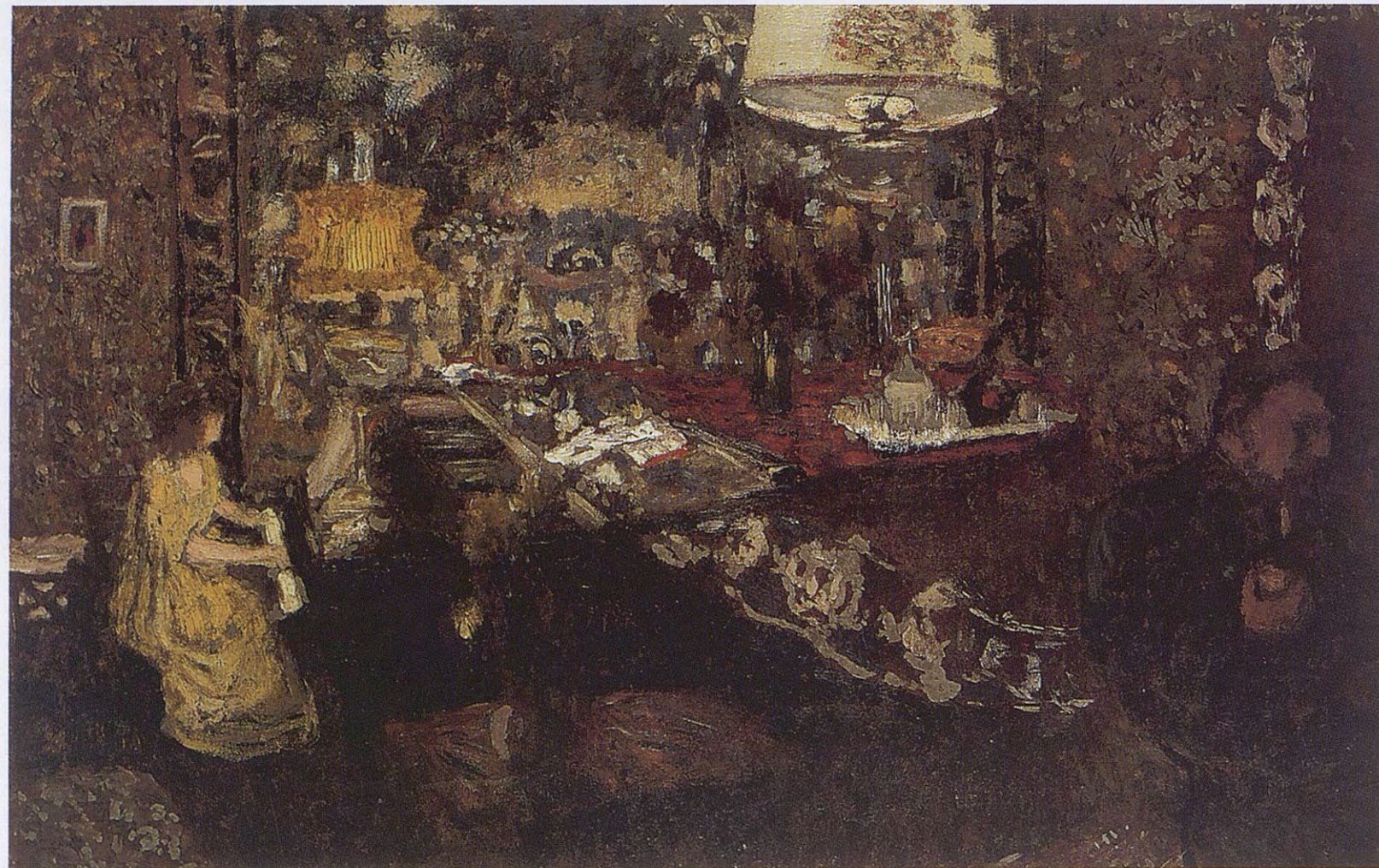
**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 10104, *Intérieur. Dame au piano*), 23 Dec. 1899, 900 F – Jos Hessel, Paris, 23 Dec. 1899, 1,350 F – Dr Jacques Soubies, Paris, c. 1936 – J. H. Bomfort, c. 1938 – Lefevre, London – A. J. L. McDonnell, Australia, 1948 – F Partridge – Marlborough, London and Lefevre, London, 1962 – Geneva, Musée de l'Athénée, 1966

– Museum sale – Dr. A. S. Schaefer, Switzerland – Thomas Ammann Fine Arts AG, Zurich (Switzerland), 18 Dec. 1990 – Collection Josefowitz, 1990 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1900, no. 7 [*Près du piano*] – Paris, Rosenberg, 1936, no. 32 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 71 [*Misia au piano*] – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 65 – London, Lefevre, Nov.-Dec. 1962, no. 24 (ill.); and 1964, no. 4 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 43 (ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 49 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** *Apollo* 76, no. 10, Dec. 1962, p. 808 (ill.) – Huisman 1963, pp. 60-61 (col. ill.) – *The Burlington Magazine* 105, no. 720, March 1963, p. LII (ill.) – Gold and Fildale 1980, pp. 39-40, 114 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 72 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 323-324, fig. 178 – Ellridge 1993, p. 204 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, pp. 83, 89, col. fig. 139.

This is the most startling of Vuillard's depictions of the Natansons' drawing-room: we recognise the piano draped with a Spanish shawl and the two lamps in front of the tapestry, all in their appointed places. Through an effect of exaggerated perspective, Misia in her



VI-45

golden-yellow dress looks like she is a long way off from her husband, who, partly immersed in shadow, has his back to her and is smoking a pipe. This divided view of the two figures is a tactful allusion to the cracks that were beginning to appear in the Natansons' relationship. The artist's 'fish-eye' furnishes him with the *techné* needed to pursue the empirical exploration of the world he was familiar with. The skilled stage-designer who feasted on private dramas, even stirring them up on occasion, has by now become a tactful poet of atmospheres of incipient crisis.

Shown at the Galerie Bernheim in 1900, this picture prompted André Fontainas, one of the leading turn-of-the-century chroniclers of Symbolism, to exclaim enthusiastically: 'In his larger compositions, the artist's aim, his emotion and power, reveal themselves to be of a nature that, if not more imperious, is no less intimate and penetrating. Evenings in a pleasantly enclosed salon, lit by a mellow lamp, while one listens, surrounded by the softness of yielding cushions, to the dream a young woman's radiant fingers draw forth from the piano, or to slow-flowing friendly talk, or to the silence that draws people together. Oh! the sweetness of everyday things when one knows how to open one's eyes to them! Monsieur Vuillard is a marvellous poet and a bewildering painter.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> André Fontainas, 'Revue du mois', *Mercur de France* 34, no. 125, May 1900, p. 545.

## VI-46

### Misia at the Piano

c. 1899

Oil on cardboard, 51 × 67 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – George Prins, London; Mrs Vivian Prins, London – Lefevre, London, 1977 – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibition:** London, Lefevre, 1977, no. 53 (ill.).

**Description:** *The black mass of the piano in the foreground blends with the floor and the brown panelled walls. The pianist, in a dark dress dotted with ultramarine and green, is looking at the white patch of her music score illuminated by a lamp with a pink*



VI-46

*shade. Her silhouette stands out against a Genoese cotton panel in the background. Beige cardboard support thinly coated with grey and pink. (JS)*

## VI-47

### By the Piano

1899

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 49 × 53.5 cm

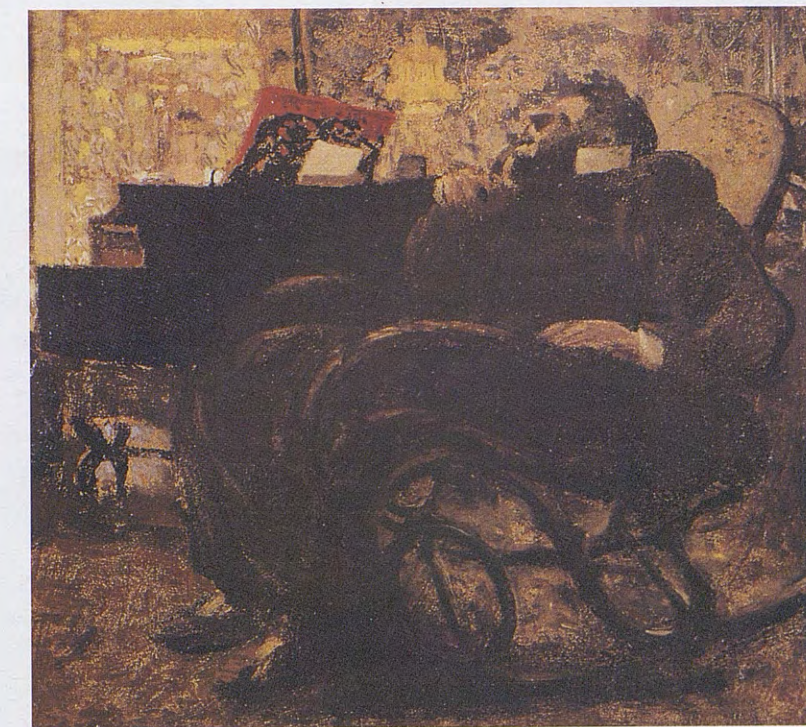
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*

Private collection

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 48 [*Autour du piano*] – Alexandre Natanson, for 500 F – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 112 (ill.) – Walter Hadorn, Berne – Private collection, Switzerland, 1953 – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne (Switzerland), c. 1989 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Basle, Beyeler, 1953, no. 25bis – Lausanne, Vallotton, 1989, no. 4 (col. ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 69, p. 80 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Bernier 1991, p. 293 (col. ill.).



VI-47





VI-48

## VI-48 In Front of the Tapestry

1899  
Oil on cardboard, 49.5 × 52.7 cm  
Signed: *E. Vuillard* and inscribed  
to *Godebska*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Marguerite Chapin (Princesse Caetani de Bassiano), Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 19994, *Devant la tapisserie*), 26 June 1913, 752 F – Alex Reid, Glasgow, 23 Feb. 1920, part of lot – Antonio Santamarina, Buenos Aires, 1951 – Lucy Escobar de Santamarina, New Canaan (Connecticut) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 1 July 1964, lot 77a

(col. ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 July 1969, lot 52 (col. ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 27 June 1977, lot 28 (col. ill.), bought in – Private foundation, California, c. 1989 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 11 May 1993, lot 38 (col. ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 11 May 1999, lot 108 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Glasgow, McLellan, 1920, no. 136 – Buenos Aires, Bellas Artes, 1933, no. 125 – Buenos Aires, Jacques Helft, 1951, no. 81 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 82 (col. fig.) [*Misia and Thadée*].

**Bibliography:** *The Burlington Magazine* 106, no. 735, June 1964, p. XLVII (ill.) – *The Connoisseur* 156, no. 628, June 1964, p. v (ill.) – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 250-251, fig. 116 – Easton 1989, p. 109 – Groom 1993, p. 250.



E. V., preparatory drawing for *In Front of the Tapestry*, graphite on paper, 9.5 × 11.1 cm.  
Private collection.

Given the Nabis' veneration for Degas' work, this picture could be regarded as Vuillard's version of *The Bellelli Family*.<sup>1</sup> Caught in attitudes of icy indifference, the Natan-sons studiously ignore each other. The painter has considerably exaggerated the size of Thadée's hand, as if he were covering his ears so as not to hear Misia, who has in any case forsaken her piano here. The young woman's concentration on her needlework is reminiscent of Vuillard's Nabi depictions



Aubusson tapestry, from the series *Children's Games*, cartoon by Michel Corneille, late seventeenth century. Chevallier Photographic archives.

of Marie sewing. Note the merry rustic scene on the tapestry in the background (see ill.), a striking counterpoise to the cold indifference of the childless couple.

<sup>1</sup> Edgar Degas, *The Bellelli Family*, c. 1860-62, oil on canvas, 200 × 250 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

## VI-49 Misia in White, Wearing a Red Necklace and Playing the Piano

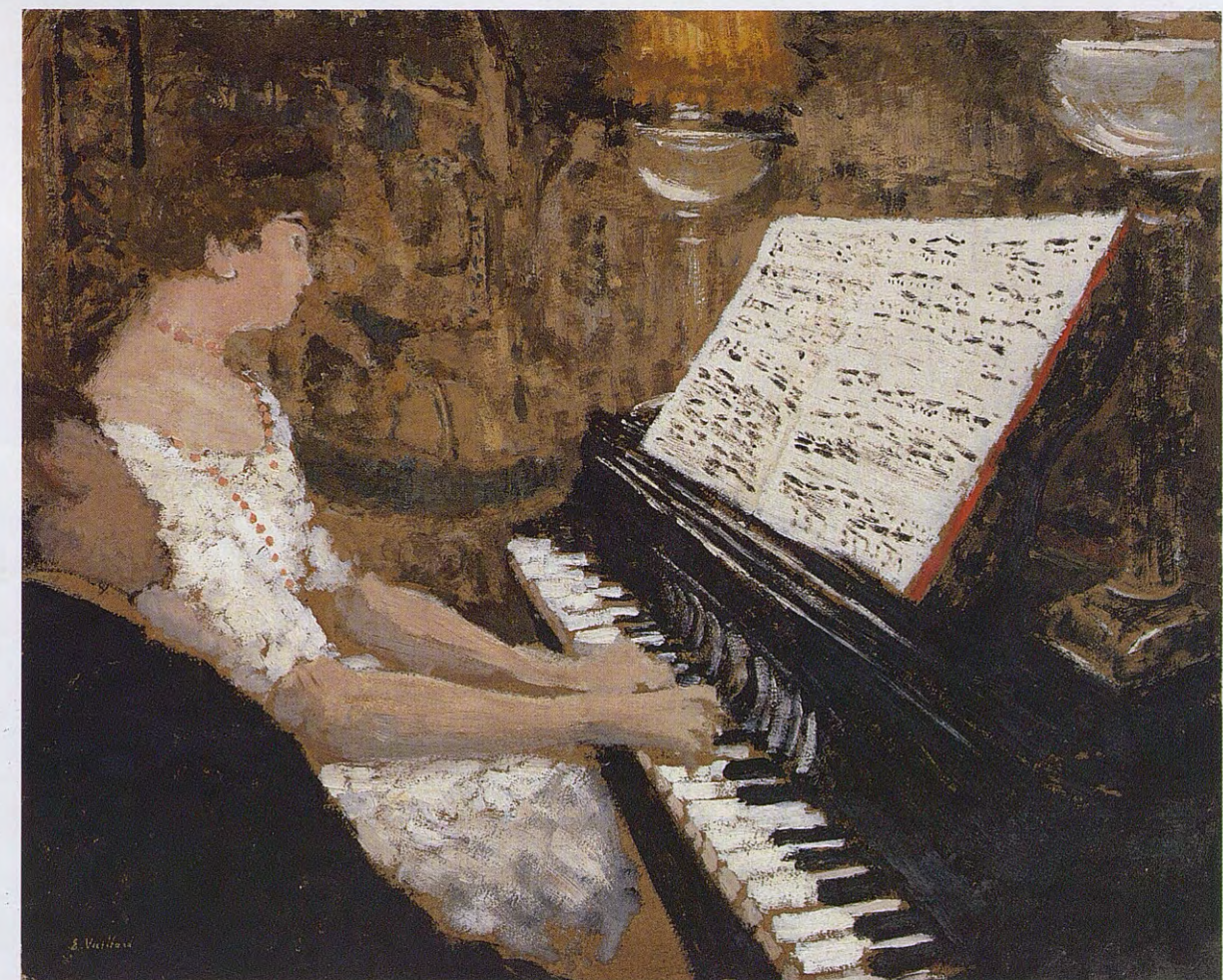
1899  
Oil on cardboard, 46 × 55 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Jos Hessel, Paris, 1916 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 55 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 28 – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 70 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 84 – Huisman 1963, p. 63 (col. ill.) – Roger-Marx 1968, col. pl. 1 – *Plaisir de France*, no. 355, May 1968, p. 12 (col. ill.) – Charles-Roux 1979, p. 156 (ill.); and 1980, p. 13 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, p. 72 – Ciaffa 1985, fig. 176 – Warnod 1988, pp. 27, 51 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, p. 89.

Though painted *alla breve*, this picture is an image of absorption in a musical performance. The *profil perdu* of the listener or page-turner – possibly Romain Coolus? – expresses rapture, while the notes appear to be dancing, albeit somewhat elliptically, on the score. Misia's features show signs of coarsening.



VI-49





VI-50

## VI-50 The Lady with the Lamp

1899  
Pastel on paper, 50 × 38 cm  
Signed, centre right: *EVuillard*  
South African National Gallery, Cape Town

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 49 [*La Dame à la lampe*] – M. Bernard – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 27 Feb. 1909, lot 63 –



VI-51

Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Knoedler, London – James E. Hanson, London – Lefevre, London, 1968 – Count Nicholas H. Labia, South Africa, 1971; Natale Labia, South Africa; on loan to the South African National Gallery, Cape Town, 1978.

**Exhibition:** London, Lefevre, 1968, no. 27 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 82.

## VI-51 Interior with Four Figures

1899  
Oil on canvas or cardboard, 48 × 59 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Jacques Dubourg, Paris – Sale, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 18 March 1959, lot 78 (ill.) – Katia Granoff, Paris – Hirschl & Adler, New York – Jacques Lindon, New York, c. 1965 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 54.

**Description:** *In the background, a bearded young man stands in front of a bright yellow curtain talking to a woman in a white ruff. A second woman is seated side-on in an armchair in the left foreground. Lighting from invisible lamps.* (JS)



VI-52

## VI-52 The Bare Arms

1899  
Oil on cardboard, 50 × 59 cm  
Signed, upper left: *E Vuillard*  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 62 [*Les Bras nus*] – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 16707), 1,300 F – Herbert Esche, 22 June 1908, 1,430 F – Esche Luschinger, Zollikoberg (Switzerland) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 24–25 Nov. 1964, lot 136 (col. ill.), bought in – Galerie Bellier, Paris, 1990.

**Exhibition:** Zurich, Kunsthau, 1954.

**Bibliography:** Groom 1993, p. 87.

## VI-53 Lady in Blue and Child

1899  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 48.6 × 56.5 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*  
Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow (Great Britain), 2814

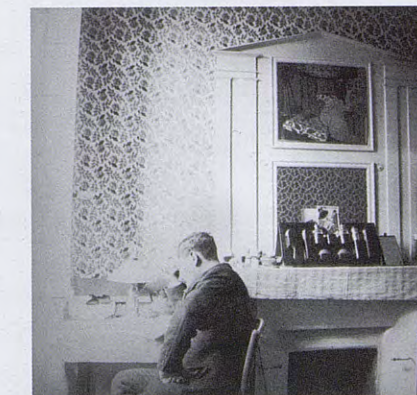
**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 50 [*La Dame bleue à l'enfant*] – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 16703), 1,650 F – Octave



VI-53

Mirbeau, Paris, 24 June 1908 – Mirbeau sale, Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, 24 Feb. 1919, lot 58 (ill.) – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 21449), 6,462.50 F – Thomas Justice & Sons, Dundee (Great Britain) and Alex Reid, Glasgow, 11 Oct. 1919 – Sir John Richmond, Ayrshire (Great Britain), 1920 – Richmond gift to the Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow, 1948.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 41 – Glasgow, McLellan, 1920, no. 127 – Glasgow, Art Gallery and Museum, 1943, no. 12 – Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, 1944, no. 229 – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1949, no. 265 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 49 [*Mother and Baby*], 102 (col. ill.) – Belfast, Museum and Art Gallery, 1958–59, no. 20 – Paris,



E. V. Romain Coolus at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, 1899, photograph. Private collection.

Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1960–61, no. 741 – Wolfsburg, Stadthalle, 1961, no. 172 – London, Royal Academy, 1962, no. 237 – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963–64, no. 313 (ill.) – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1968, no. 37 (ill.) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971–72, p. 227, no. VII (col. ill.) – Glasgow, Art Gallery and Museum, 1972–73, no. 117 – Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, 1980, no. 9 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991–92, no. 35 (col. ill.) – Zurich, 1993, no. 176 (col. ill.) – San Francisco-Dallas-Bilbao, 1999–2000, no. 414, p. 258 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, pp. 40 (ill.), 60 – Hall 1949, pp. 22, 24 (col. ill.) – Glasgow 1953, pp. 54 (col. ill.), 78 – Ritchie 1954, p. 16 – Cachin 1962,



p. 54 (ill.) – Bowness 1965, p. 118 (ill.) – Glasgow 1967, pp. 28, 109 (col. ill.) – Daniel 1984, p. 216, fig. 76 – Glasgow 1985, p. 148 (col. ill.) – Thomson 1988, pp. 64, 68, col. pl. 50 – Easton 1989, pp. 114–115, col. fig. 86 – Makarius 1989, pp. 7, 8 (col. ill.) – Berger 1992, p. 226, col. pl. XI – Groom 1993, p. 83, col. fig. 143 – Kahng, exhib. cat., San Francisco-Dallas-Bilbao, 1999–2000, pp. 257, 258 (col. ill.), 259.

That the protagonists of this composition are the same as those of *The Black Cups* (XI-224) seems unlikely at first glance. Nevertheless, this is indeed Misia holding her niece Mimi Godebska in her arms. The baby had been born earlier that year to her half-brother Cipa and a young woman from Cracow he had met some time before on a journey to Poland: 'This young woman, who was intelligent and spoke fluent French, was delighted to come and live in Paris. I happened to be present at the birth of her little daughter Marie-Anne, who came into the world as the sun was rising and was so pretty that I have always treasured the memory of that day. When the midwife presented the child after she had been washed, I was astonished by her beauty, especially as I had always found the sight of a newborn baby and everything to do with childbirth extremely distasteful.'<sup>1</sup> This confidence of Misia's only confirms, if confirmation were needed, that her maternal inclinations were, to say the least, limited. The familiar items of furniture are all there in the composition: the Louis XV 'duchesse', the screen, the tripod, for once depicted with a sort of photographic hyper-realism (like the central table in the *Large Interior with Six Figures*, IV-215). The perspective looms out at us.

The artist's virtuosity here is stunning: every one of the precariously balanced objects he juggles with is viewed from a skewed perspective, in conjunction with more or less artfully distributed 'decoy' objects that are 'collaged' onto the picture-surface. Are those animals lying on the chaise-longue? Is that really a piece of fabric on the mantelpiece? Such questions are of course absurd, but they serve to bring out the chameleon-like qualities of the items in the picture-space. Vuillard is the undisputed master of a shifting inventory; he gives a memorable, vivid

presence to the feints of an elusive reality whose boundaries seem to vanish into thin air, but its mind-boggling magic summons up a *tactile* perception of space: 'This synaesthetic confusion in which sight and touch are interwoven generates a state of indeterminacy which the artist intensifies at will, here and there adding a few patches [of colour] to increase our puzzlement.'<sup>2</sup> As shown by a photograph taken by Vuillard himself (see ill.), *Lady in Blue and Child* was



Alfred Natanson, Misia Natanson playing with the baby on the steps of the villa Le Relais at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, 1899, photograph. Private collection.

somewhat surprisingly incorporated into the upper section of a neoclassical fireplace at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, on a ground of floral wallpaper reminiscent of that of the rue Saint-Florentin. In another hitherto unpublished photograph (see ill.), probably taken by Alfred Natanson, Misia is playing with an infant on the steps of the villa Le Relais at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne.

<sup>1</sup> Sert 1952, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Makarius 1989, p. 7.

## VI-54 Misia at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne

1897-98

Oil on plywood, 42 × 62.5 cm

Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyons (France),

inv. no. 1967-4

**Provenance:** Léon Delaroche, Paris – Mmes Brémond and Lignel, Paris – Brémond-Lignel gift to the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, 1967.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 74 (ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 67, p. 16 (col. ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, pp. 45 (col. ill.), 46-47, no. 28 – Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, no. 175, p. 98 (col. ill.) – Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 28, p. 99 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Mercanton 1949, col. pl. 5 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 331-332, fig. 187 – Durey 1988, p. 112, no. 2 (col. ill.) – Makarius 1989, p. 40 (ill.) – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, p. 75 (ill.) – Koella, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, pp. 97-98, col. fig. 11.

**Description:** A large room painted in shades of greyish-blue, with exposed beams. Misia appears in the doorway at the centre, dressed in blue, beneath a dark lozenge-like transom. To the left is a bench with a straw seat and wooden back; to the right, the upper half of a chair by a cluttered table. Brown and beige rug on the ochre floor in the foreground. (JS)

This picture was painted during one of the three summers that Misia, Thadée and Vuillard spent at Le Relais (1897-99). We recognise the furniture from several of the painter's photographs, in particular the large bench lent by Toulouse-Lautrec (see ill.). The motif of a figure appearing in a doorway is hardly new in Vuillard's œuvre (see *Half-Open Door*, IV-15, and *Woman in Black Standing in Front of a Beige Background*, IV-25). One's initial impression is that the artist has reverted to the poetics of the *petite sensation* and the choreographic positioning of figures in space typical of his Nabi manner. But when one compares this picture to *The Half-Open Door* (II-131), the differences leap out at one: the 1891 composition crystallises around a gesture – the opening of a door – with every anecdotal detail suppressed for the sake of creating an expressive synthesis. Here, all that matters



VI-54

is the effect of the white wall filling three-quarters of the composition, its plain surface broken by details that can be verified in the artist's photographs: the sunken diamond-like transom above the door, the Burgundian bench, the beams that support the ceiling and which appear again in subsequent compositions. Surrounded by the uniform impasto of the monochrome wall, the cobalt blue stippling – on Misia's dress, on the shelf with its pots and on the seat of the chair in the foreground – creates a striking effect.



E. V., Misia Natanson by the open door of the drawing-room, 1899, photograph. Private collection.



E. V., Misia Natanson standing in the drawing-room, 1899, photograph. Private collection.





VI-55

## VI-55 Interior with Stove

1898  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 51 × 78 cm  
Signed and dated, upper right:  
*E Vuillard 98*  
Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (Russia), Inv. no. 6538

**Provenance:** Sergei Shchukin, Moscow, 1912 – Nationalised in 1918 – Museum of Western Modern Art, Moscow, 1919 – Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, 1930.

**Exhibitions:** Moscow, Pushkin, 1956, p. 15 – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 105 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Levinson 1921 – Morand 1925, p. 4 – Ternovetz 1925, p. 482 – Moscow, Museum of Western Modern Art, 1928, no. 56 – Réau 1929, p. 137, no. 1157 – Moscow, Museum of Western Modern Art, 1938, col. pl. 23 – Aulanier 1950, p. 348 – Gubchevskiy 1953, p. 79; and 1955, p. 125 – Sterling 1957, p. 158, col. pl. 131 – Leningrad 1958, p. 367, no. 6539 – Descargues 1961, pp. 301 (ill.), 313 – Charmet 1970, p. 93, col. pl. 47 – Barskaya 1975, no. 106 (col. ill.) – Eisler 1990, p. 446 (col. ill.).



VI-56

## VI-56 The Stove at Le Relais

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 34 × 22 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 3 Dec. 1981, lot 725 (ill.) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 29 March 1984, lot 541 (ill.) – Galerie Bellier, Paris – Sale, Hôtel des Cheval-Légers, Versailles, 27 March 1994, lot 174 (ill.), bought in – Galerie Bellier, Paris – Sale, Drouot-Montaigne, Paris, 17 Nov. 1994, lot 332 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Lausanne, Vallotton, June-Sept. 1988, no. 130 (col. ill.).



VI-57

## VI-57 Cover of the Album *Paysages et Intérieurs*

1897-98  
Study for lithograph (R-M 31)  
Pastel on paper, 53 × 41 cm  
Art market, Bremen (Germany)

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Dr Robert C. Levy, Chicago (Illinois) – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 4 Nov. 1993, lot 250 (col. ill.) – Kunsthandel Wolfgang Werner, Bremen.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 31 – Bremen, Werner, 1993-94, no. 72.

## VI-58 Misia with Tapestry Work

1897-99  
Pastel on paper, 52 × 55 cm  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A woman in a white and pink dress-gown, her fair hair gleaming under the light, is seated in front of a striped orange and yellow canvas over which purple shadows play. The mauve-brown and dark-green harmony of the embroidery frame and several skeins of wool surround this bright patch at the centre. (JS)



VI-58

## VI-59 Misia

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 33.5 × 39.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E.V.*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Misia Sert, Paris – Pierre Colle, Paris – Wildenstein, New York – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, L'Œil, 1963, no. 5 – Washington D.C., Adams Davidson, 1978, no. 25 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Huisman 1963, p. 59 (ill.) – Charles-Roux 1979, p. 143 (ill.) – Gold and Fizdale 1980, p. 114 (col. ill.) – Wagner 1981, p. 113 (ill.).

## VI-60 Misia in a Red Print Blouse Recto of VI-66

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on canvas, 53 × 49 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Mexico

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York, c. 1964 – Private collection, Mexico, c. 1989.

**Exhibitions:** Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 44 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 33 – Paris, L'Œil, 1963, no. 6 (ill.) – New York, Wildenstein, Sept. 1964, no. 72; and Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 16 (ill.) – Corpus Christi, Art Museum, 1968 – New York, Wildenstein, 1972, no. 70



VI-59

– Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 18 (col. ill.) – New York, Wildenstein, 1983, p. 88 – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 81 (ill.).

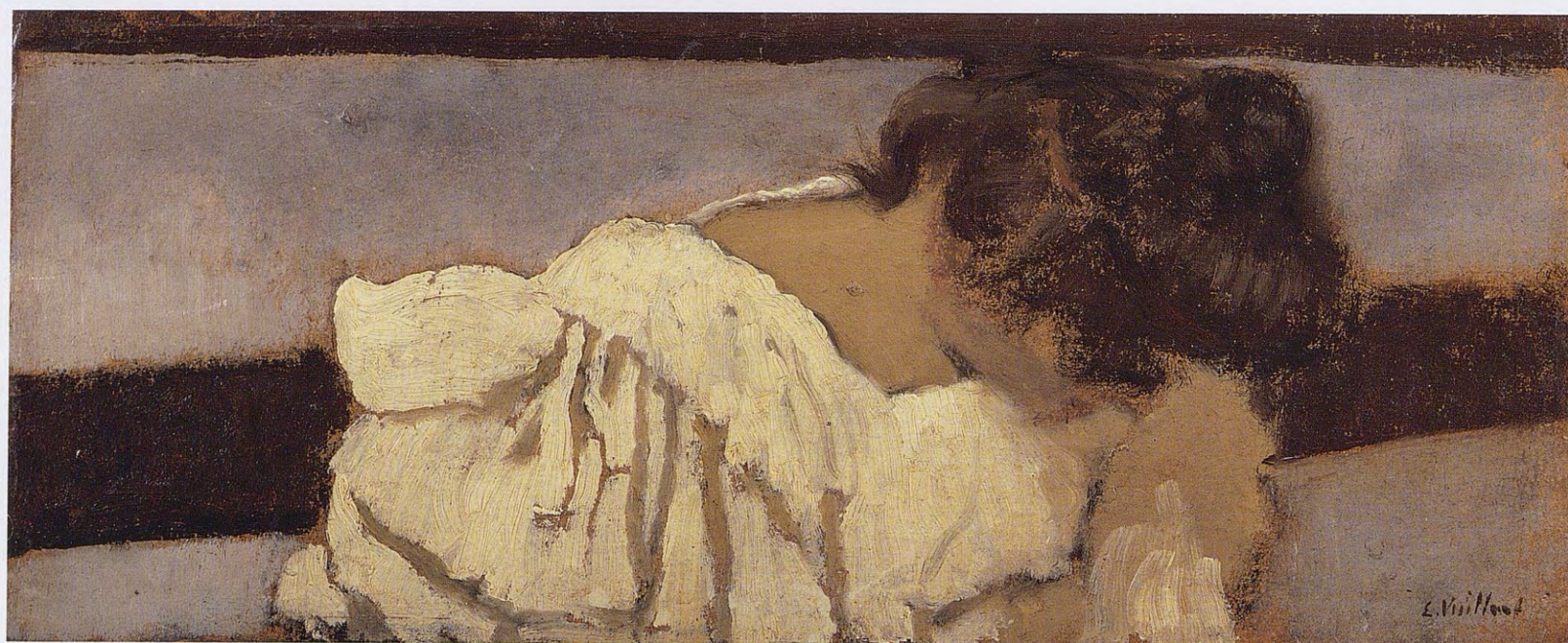
**Bibliography:** *L'Œil*, no. 100, April 1963, p. 25 (ill.) – *Antiques*, Nov. 1964, p. 550 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1968, col. pl. 7 – Charles-Roux 1979, pp. 142-143 (col. ill.) – Gold and Fizdale 1980, p. 68 – Ciaffa 1985, p. 329, fig. 185.

**Description:** Presented against a grey background, a fair-haired woman with a large chignon and a red-and-white print blouse is seated in an armchair, her elbows resting on its brown arms. Her grey and pink face is bent slightly forwards; the eyebrows and pupils are black. Painted on the back of the portrait of Vallotton [VI-66].(AC)



VI-60





VI-61

## VI-61 The Nape of Misia's Neck

1897-99

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 13.5 × 33 cm

Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*

Private collection

**Provenance:** Sacha Guitry, Paris – José Maria Serty Badia, Spain (?) – Private collection.**Exhibition:** Montréal, Paris, 2000-01, pp. 276 (col. ill.), 461.**Bibliography:** Guitry 1952, p. 101 (ill.).**Description:** *Clad in a white blouse with a loose olive-yellow collar and puffed sleeves, Misia is leaning forward, her face partly concealed by her brown hair pinned up in an untidy chignon. Grey background shading into ochre at the bottom and bisected by a sort of black skirting-board.* (JS)

This small, little-known picture is a masterpiece of passionate restraint. Omnipresent in Vuillard's paintings in the years 1895 to 1900, Misia Natanson was Vuillard's constant muse and the great, secret love of his life. It was she who helped him overcome the inhibitions of his mopish, ironic, juvenile sensuality. In the autobiography she wrote decades later, Misia relates, no doubt honestly, an episode that reveals a great deal about the timidity of the painter's impulses: 'Echoes of

that commotion [the Dreyfus affair] reached me even at Villeneuve, which I decided to leave earlier than was my wont. Vuillard wanted to go for a last stroll along the banks of the Yonne. We set out at sunset. Grave and preoccupied, he led me along the river lined with tall birches with silver trunks. I do not recall that we talked. He walked slowly through the yellowing grass and I automatically fell in with his silent mood. The daylight was fading fast, and we took a shortcut back across a beet field. Our silhouettes, walking side-by-side, were no more than pale shadows against the calm sky. The ground was getting rough under our feet. I caught my foot on a root and stumbled. Vuillard stopped at once to help me regain my balance. Suddenly our gazes met. All I saw were his sad eyes shining in the growing darkness. He broke into sobs. It was the most beautiful declaration of love that a man ever made me.<sup>21</sup>

In all likelihood painted at Le Relais, as Misia's summer dress and relaxed pose attest, this picture, with its unusual format, reveals a decidedly sensual side to Vuillard's character. The lock of hair falling over the sitter's gaze and the blush-like shadow on her cheek have an arousing effect; but what catches the eye most is the way Misia exposes the nape of her neck, allowing it to become an object of erotic fascination (which can't have been entirely displeasing to the picture's



Kitagawa Utamaro,  
*The Mirror*, c. 1795,  
print. Musée Guimet,  
Paris.

successive owners, Sacha Guitry and Misia's third husband, José-Maria Sert). The simplicity of the rendering favours the kind of gaze one usually casts on a person or object one loves, and is enhanced by an elegant detachment worthy of Utamaro's portraits of courtesans (see ill.).

<sup>21</sup> Sert 1952, pp. 66-67.



E. V., Vuillard and Misia in the garden of Le Relais, 1899, photograph. Private collection.

## VI-62

### Woman Darning

1897-99

Oil on cardboard, 48 × 51 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York, c. 1954 – Hans Popper, San Francisco (California), c. 1961 – Current whereabouts unknown.**Exhibitions:** Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 61 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 43 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 54 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 24 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 159 [*La Couture*] – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 102 – Phoenix-Oakland, 1961, no. 97 – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 14 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1972, no. 905.**Bibliography:** Chastel 1948, col. pl. v – Huisman 1963, p. 58 (ill.) – Georges 1982, pp. 41, 60.**Description:** *Against green, grey and brown horizontal bands – a couch and wall in the background – a woman in a checked black dress is seated at a round ochre table, her head bent forwards, her face hidden by her hair.* (AC)

VI-62

## VI-63

### Portrait of Thadée Natanson

1897

Oil on cardboard, 39.5 × 33 cm

Signed, lower left: *E. V.*

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Ambroise Vollard, Paris – Étienne Bignou, Paris – Michel Couturier, Paris, c. 1966 – Current whereabouts unknown.**Description:** *The bearded profile of the sitter in black stands out with unusual distinctness against the cream-coloured background and the reddish brown of a roundish vase filled with almond-green flowers* (JS)

VI-63





VI-64

## VI-64 Thadée Natanson

1897  
Oil on cardboard, 52.1 × 39.4 cm  
Signed, upper right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 45 [*M. Thadée IV*] – André Gide, Paris, 1,600 F – Dr Albert Charpentier, Paris – Charpentier sale, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 30 March 1954, lot 32 (ill.) – Paul Rosenberg, New York – Walter Bareiss, Greenwich (Connecticut) – Sale,

Sotheby's, New York, 16 Nov. 1983, lot 27A (col. ill.) – Lafayette Park, San Francisco (California), c. 1987 – William Kelly Simpson, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Brussels, [La Libre Esthétique], 1909, no. 279 – Munich, Neue Staatsgalerie, 1965, no. 1010 (ill.) – New York, Loeb and Kruger, 1969, no. 89, not exhibited – Katonah, The Katonah Gallery, 1989, no. 8 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1932, p. 240 (ill.); and 1946a, p. 83 – Salomon 1961, pp. 44-45 (ill.) – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 260-261, fig. 128.

This picture was painted in the summer of 1897 during the painter's stay at Le Relais; in

fact, it can be seen hanging on the wall behind Misia in one of the photographs Vuillard took at Villeneuve in 1897 (see illustration for *Misia at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne*, VI-54). More than just a portrait, it is a depiction of a moment of privacy in which Thadée is once again seen absorbed in his favourite activity, reading. The effect of the red and white spots on his shirt is particularly fine. This composition should be seen in conjunction with Félix Vallotton's strictly contemporaneous *Portrait of Thadée Natanson* (see ill.). The same decorative elements are present – the Burgundian cupboard and the villa's characteristic ceiling beams and



Félix Vallotton, *Portrait of Thadée Natanson*, 1897, oil on canvas. Petit Palais, Musée d'Art Moderne, Geneva.

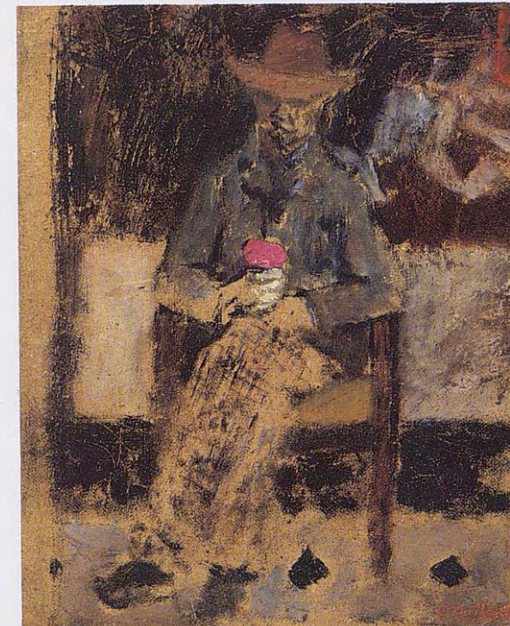
posts – though the wooden attitude and anxious gaze of Vallotton's portrayal hark back to the tried-and-tested models of the Italian Renaissance (which is far from being the case in Vuillard's painting).

In a letter to Vallotton dated 28 July of the same year, Thadée reported: 'Vuillard has taken to *portraiture*, and will undoubtedly delight you with his new passion, to which he gives himself with the utmost candour. It's a field in which he will doubtless do excellent things, is [in fact] doing so already. I'm to serve him [as a model?] shortly'.<sup>1</sup>



E. V., preparatory sketch for *Thadée Natanson*, graphite on paper, 17.6 × 11 cm. Private collection.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Thadée Natanson to Félix Vallotton, 28 July 1897, in Guisan and Jakubec 1975b, p. 11.



VI-65

## VI-65 Vallotton with a Rose

1897  
Oil on cardboard, 27 × 22 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Gift to Mme Paul Vallotton, Lausanne, 1949 – Private collection, Lausanne (Switzerland).

**Exhibitions:** Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 23 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951, no. 186 – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-64, no. 317a – Zurich, 1964, no. 143 – Munich, Galleria del Levante, 1966, no. 51 (ill.) – Lausanne, Vallotton, 1973, no. 10 (ill.); and 1978-79, no. 9 – Rochester, Memorial Art Gallery, 1984, no. 80 (col. ill.) – Lausanne, Paul Vallotton, 1989, no. 1.

**Bibliography:** Humbert 1954a, pl. 54 – 'Antologia', *Arte moderna* II, no. 18, 1967, p. 370 (ill.) – Warnod 1988, p. 42 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A portrait of the painter Vallotton in striped trousers, grey jacket and brown hat, seated in front of a black and brown background, holding a rose in his lap. The flower provides the only vivid note in an otherwise subdued ensemble. The cardboard ground shows through near the bottom. (AC)

The white floor tiles with black diamonds indicate that the scene is set at Natanson's villa at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, Le Relais.

## VI-66 Portrait of Vallotton Verso of VI-60

1897-98  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on canvas,  
53 × 48.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Kunstmuseum Bern, Berne, Inv. Nr. 1841

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Poyet, Paris – Feilchenfeldt, Zurich (Switzerland) – E. von Steiger-Pinson bequest to Kunstmuseum Bern, 1956.

**Exhibitions:** London, Wildenstein, 1954, no. 121 – Vevey, Musée Jenisch, 1954, no. 199 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 41 – Zurich, 1964, no. 147 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 115 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 75 (ill.) – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1974-75, no. 8 (ill.) – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 32, p. 49 (ill.) – Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 31.

**Bibliography:** Wagner 1957, pp. 1, 3 (ill.) – Berne 1960, pl. 174 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 271-272, fig. 135.

**Description:** Seated in the same brown wooden armchair in which Vuillard depicted Misia in a red floral pattern blouse [VI-60, verso], Vallotton is seen facing left, in three-quarters profile. His clothes are dark, his legs crossed. The bold delineations of the thinly painted face suggests the work of certain Italian primitives. Warm brown tones of a chest or cupboard on the left, grey wall on the right. The whole is enlivened by the small white triangle of the tie beneath the artist's goatee. (JS)

Very different from *Vallotton in His Studio* (VI-104), this portrait is an example of Vuillard's ability to shift on occasion to a more realistic style. The sitter's pose with crossed arms, his glowering expression and the roughly sketched background might belong to the painter's Nabi years. The detailed rendering of the face, however, especially the



VI-66



chilly gaze, 'pale, [and] as cutting as the icy north wind',<sup>1</sup> tell us a lot about the uneasy, watchful psychology of the misanthropic Vallotton. 'He had an air of being constantly on his guard, which added to the embarrassment of his shyness and which he never completely shed'.<sup>2</sup>

A photograph taken by Alfred Athis around the same period (see ill.) shows Vallotton comfortably ensconced in a garden chair at Le Relais.



Alfred (Athis) Natanson, Vallotton in the garden at Le Relais, c. 1898, photograph. Private collection.

<sup>1</sup> Vaillant 1974, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Natanson 1948, p. 305



VI-67

### VI-67 Vallotton at the Natansons' House

1897

Oil on cardboard, 37 × 27.5 cm

Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*

Private collection

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908,

lot 46 [*Le Peintre*], bought in – Comtesse Jean de Polignac, Paris – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Brussels, [La Libre Esthétique], 1901, no. 523 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 46 – Brussels, [La Libre Esthétique], 1909, no. 281 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 22 – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 20.

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1961, no. 52, p. 53 (col. ill.) – Huisman 1963, p. 59 (ill.) – Polignac 1965, p. 137.

### VI-68 The Reader (Romain Coolus)

1897-99

Oil on cardboard, 34 × 27 cm

Signed and dedicated, upper right:

*à Coolus / E Vuillard*

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Romain Coolus, Paris – Dr Prosper-Émile Weil, Paris, c. 1938 – Private collection, Paris – Vicente Madrigal Collection, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1907-08, no. 137; and Nov. 1908, no. 22 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 63 [*Romain Coolus en noir, avec une chemise bleue, assis sur une chaise*].

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 83-84.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Romain Coolus*, 1899, oil on cardboard. Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi.

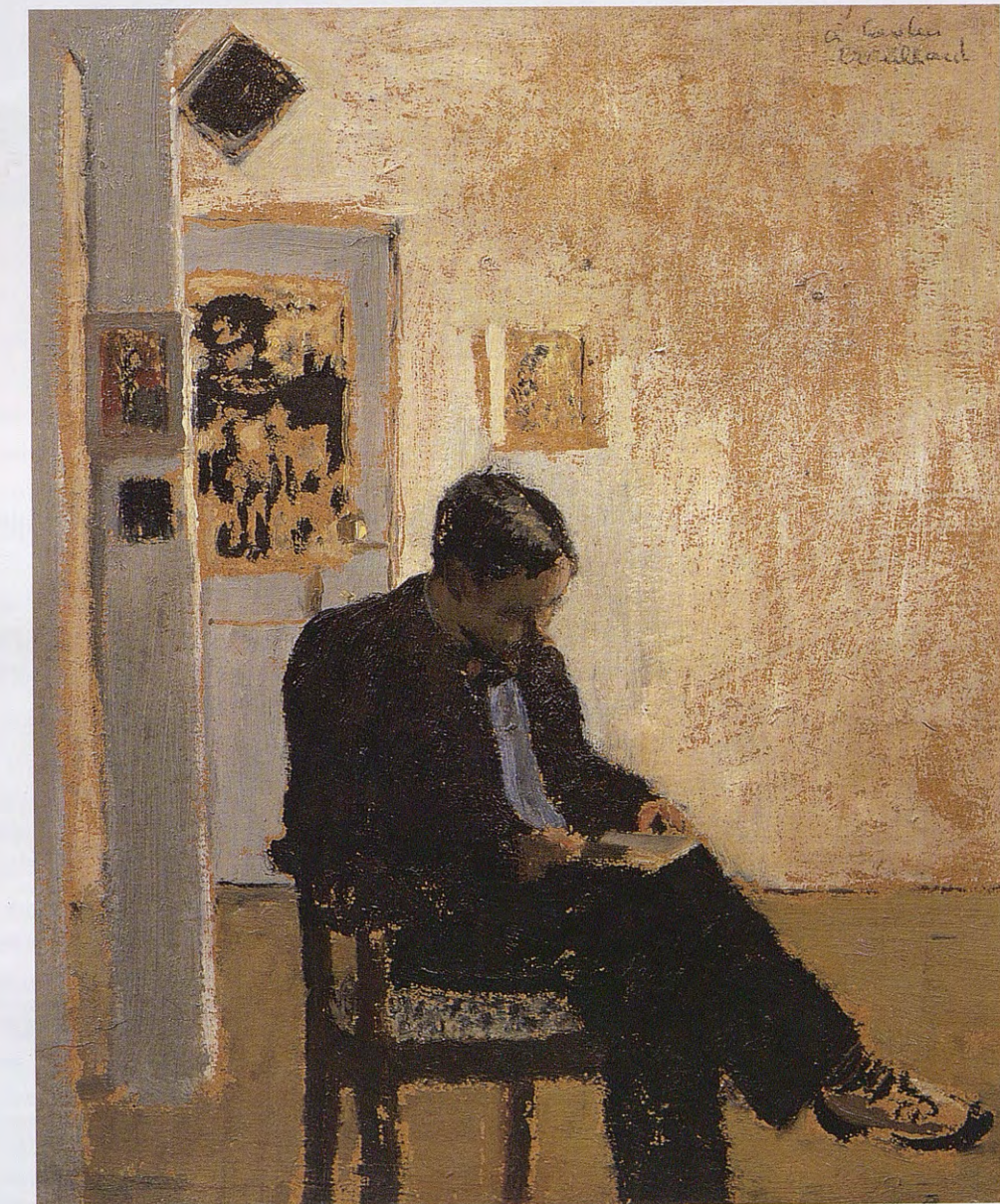
The villa Le Relais is easily identified by its light-grey posts, the struts supporting the ceiling beams and the lozenge-shaped transom above the door. The peace and quiet of an afternoon in the country, given up to reading, is the prevailing mood here. The sitter is Vuillard's friend Romain Coolus, observed

in an attitude of reflective relaxation. The blue shirt and light shoes indicate a man on holiday, but elegant all the same. Pinned to the door in the background is Bonnard's well-known poster of 1894 for *La Revue Blanche*, a clever device for keeping Misia present in the room, even as Vuillard pokes fun at the discreet flirtation between Coolus and her: 'Misia is constantly cheerful, Coolus is continually paying court to her and she finds it tremendously amusing'.<sup>1</sup>

It was at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne that Toulouse-Lautrec painted his celebrated portrait of Coolus (see ill.), or 'Colette', as he could not help calling him.<sup>2</sup>

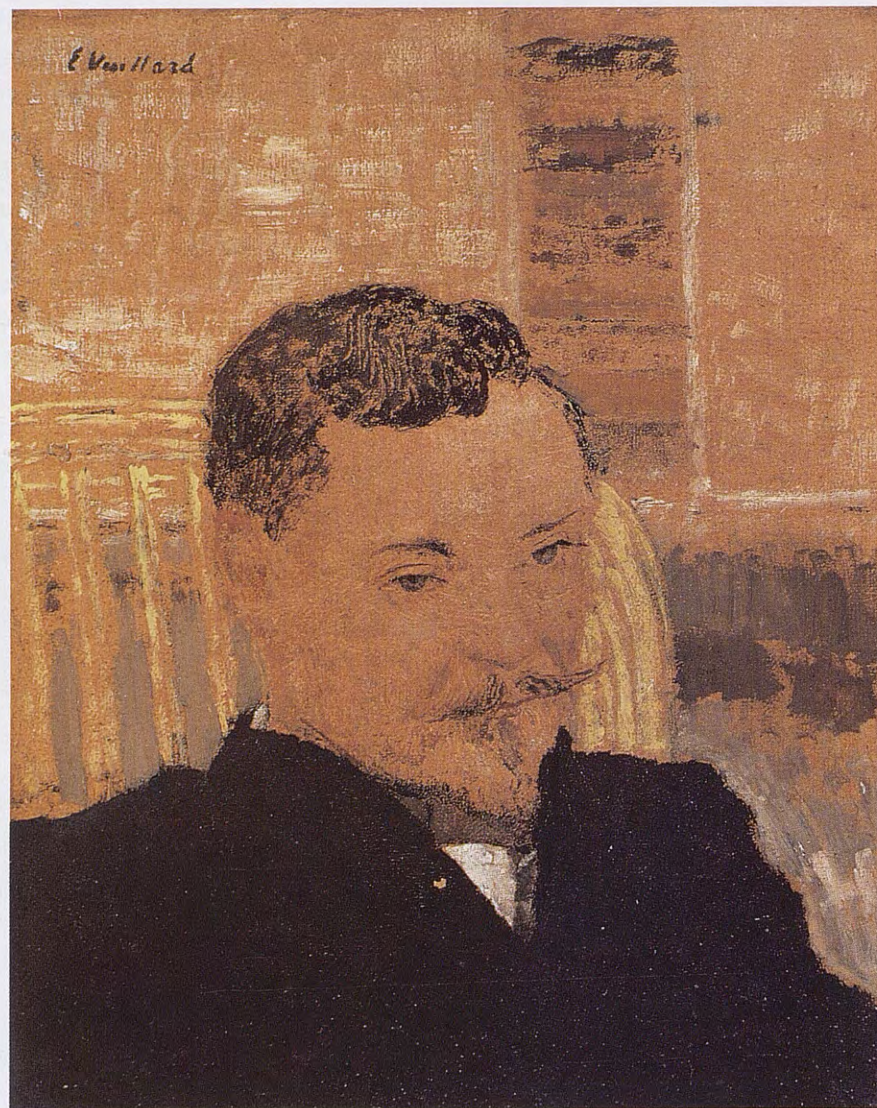
<sup>1</sup> Letter from Vuillard to Félix Vallotton, 23 Nov. 1899, in Guisan and Jakubec 1975b, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Vaillant 1956, p. 33.



VI-68





VI-69

## VI-69 Romain Coolus

1897-99

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 42.5 x 33.7 cm

Signed, upper left: *E Vuillard*

Private collection, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Mrs Mark C. Steinberg, Saint Louis (Missouri) – Mrs Ellen Schuppli, Saint Louis; on loan to the Saint Louis Art Museum, 1975-80 – Sale, Christie's, New York, 19 May 1981, lot 337 (col. ill.) – Private collection, London.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Drouin, 1941 – Saint Louis, Art Museum, 1961 – Glasgow-Sheffield-Amsterdam, 1991-92, no. 34, p. 60 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 55 – *City Art Museum of Saint Louis Bulletin* 44, no. 4, 1961 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 42 – Preston 1971, fig. 31.

Romain Coolus (1868-1952), whose real name was René Weil, belonged to the same generation as Vuillard. After a brief stint in a lycée in Chartres, where he taught philosophy, he moved to Paris, met Thadée Natanson and soon became associated with *La Revue Blanche*, to which thereafter he regularly contributed theatre criticism ('*Notes dramatiques*'). Félix Fénéon thought highly of him for his unconventional sense of humour and his posing as a snob who was forever attacking the bourgeoisie, as did Vallotton, who painted a splendid portrait of him (see ill.). Coolus made a name for himself at the review by, among other things, publishing *Exodes et Ballades*, *Nib carnavalesque* illustrated by Bonnard (April 1895) and *L'Express dans la nuit*. He took up the cudgels for Oscar Wilde's *Salome*: The Irishman's caustic one-act tragedy was in fact performed at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre on the same evening (11 February



Félix Vallotton,  
Romain Coolus, 1894,  
engraved wood.  
Private collection.

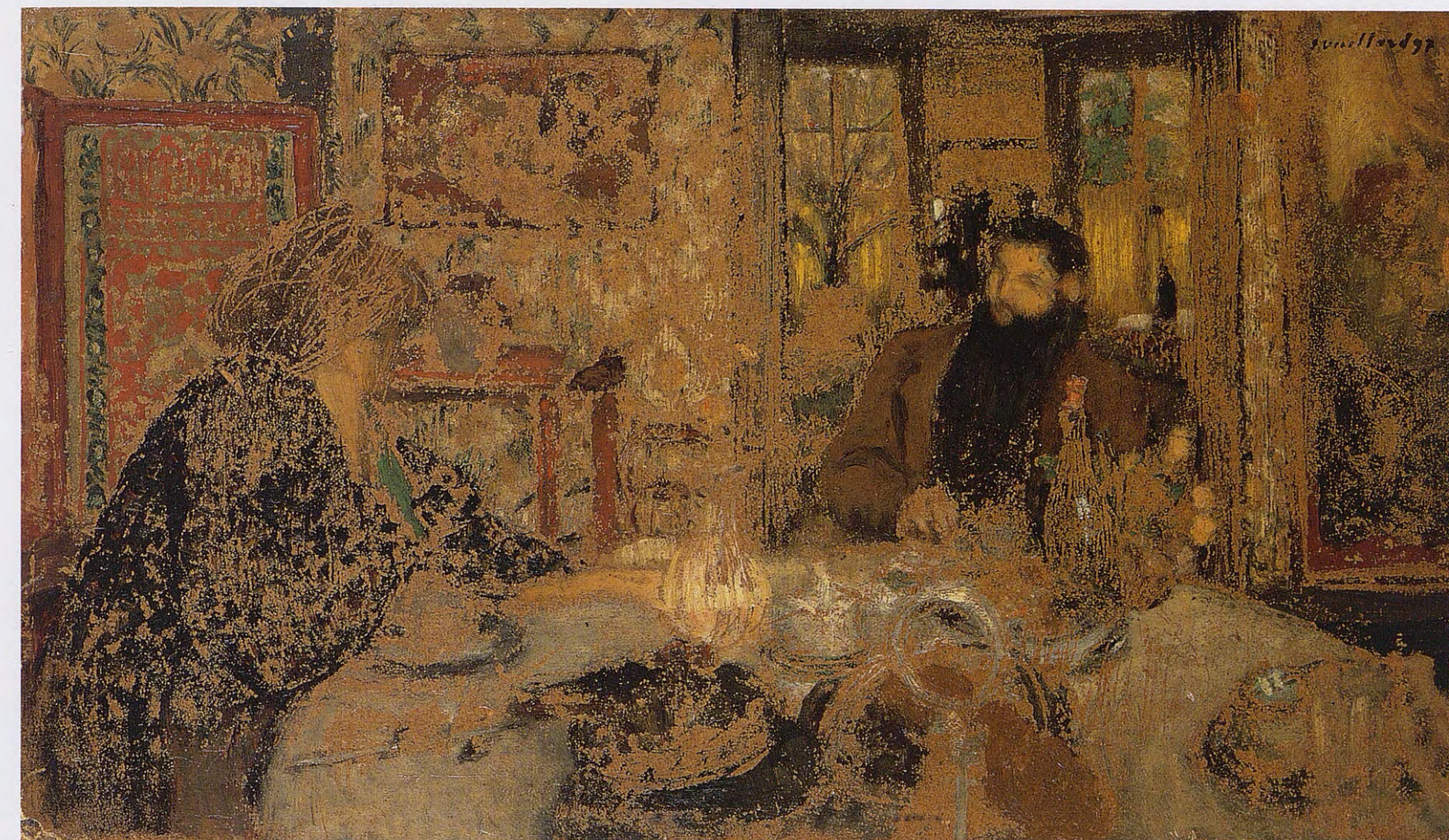
1896) as Coolus's *Raphaël* – an event recorded in a celebrated programme with a lithograph by Toulouse-Lautrec (see ill.). André Antoine produced Coolus' first play, *Le Ménage Brésil*, which paved the way for a fairly successful career as a serious dramatist who made occasional forays into light com-



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec,  
Programme  
for Raphaël and Salome, 1896, lithograph.  
Private collection.

edy. This was soon followed by *Antoinette Sabrier*, starring Réjane *Les Amants de Sazy*, considered his masterpiece, and *Cœur à cœur*. A confirmed bachelor, like Vuillard, Coolus went in for elegant cynicism in the manner of Octave Mirbeau: 'Men are not worth a farthing, and women are no better, but men are capable of becoming wise, something that is rarely given to women'.<sup>1</sup> In his later years, Coolus was elected honorary president of the Société des Auteurs Compositeurs Dramatiques. A good friend of Vuillard, he remained very close to him right up until his death, and around 1900 adopted the same artistic orientations as the Nabi painter. Later, Coolus began to frequent a more frivolous and fashionable circle, and he took to sharing its idle holidays. Like Vuillard, he moved from the world of Mallarmé to that of Henry Bernstein, though without ever renouncing his early loves. Here Vuillard succeeds in capturing the writer's razor-sharp intelligence.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Nattier-Natanson 1959, p. 117.



VI-70

## VI-70 Misia and Cipa Lunching at Villeneuve

1897

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 32 x 55 cm

Signed and dated, upper right:

*E Vuillard 97*

Private collection, United States

**Provenance:** Josse Bernheim or Gaston Bernheim de Villers, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 13134, *Le Déjeuner*), 29 April 1903, 700 F – Arthur Fontaine, 29 April 1903, 1,200 F – Fontaine sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 April 1932, lot 79 (ill.) – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris for Jos Hessel, Paris, 18,100 F – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 17-18 Feb. 1944, lot 229 (ill.) – Paul Rosenberg, New York, c. 1950 – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London, c. 1965 – Mrs Gabrielle Keiller (Great Britain), 1965 – Mayor, London, c. 1979 – Vicente Madrigal Collection, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1938, no. 8 (ill.) – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 47 [*Le Déjeuner à Villeneuve-sur-Yonne*] – Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1939,

no. 138 – New York, Rosenberg, 1950, no. 17; and Jan. 1953, no. 18 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 60 (ill.), 102 – Denver, Art Museum, 1956, no. 51 – London, Tooth & Sons, April-May 1965, no. 3 (ill.); and April-May 1969, no. 4 (col. ill. on cover) – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 41 (ill.) – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 17 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** *Art News* 49, no. 7, Nov. 1950, p. 46 (ill.) – Vaillant 1956, pp. 28-29 (ill.) – Kozloff 1971, p. 69, fig. 6 – Russell 1971, p. 48 (ill.) – Groom 1993, p. 83, fig. 136; and 2001, pp. 132, 134 (ill.).

Owing, no doubt, to the wallpaper and to the presence of *The Tapestry* hanging on the right, the consensus until recently was that this *Lunch* is set in the Natanson's rue Saint-Florentin apartment (see *Embroidery*, V-96.3). We now know that Vuillard's paintings and various other decorative items from the couple's Paris residence used to follow them on their holidays in Burgundy. Misia is seated in exactly the same spot she occupies in *Misia and Vallotton at Villeneuve* (VI-71), and her dog is visible at bottom left. Furthermore, trees can be seen

through the window, which would not have been the case at 9 rue Saint-Florentin, where the courtyard was treeless.

Annette Vaillant tells an amusing anecdote concerning the background to the painting: 'When the two friends [Cipa and Toulouse-Lautrec] were staying together at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, they dreamed up the surprising project of collaborating on a work to be called *The Bachelor*. They got no further than the opening line, which went: 'It is only really in the country that one misses bachelor life.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vaillant 1956, p. 27.



## VI-71 Misia and Vallotton at Villeneuve

1899

Oil on cardboard, 72 × 53 cm

Signed and dated, upper right:

*E Vuillard 99*

Private collection, United States



VI-71

**Provenance:** Paul Rosenberg, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 10514), 28 March 1900, exchanged for VII-212 – Mme Émile Mayrisch, Colpach (Luxembourg), 2 March 1908, 2,000 F; Mme Pierre-Viénot (née Mayrisch), Paris – Wildenstein, New York, 1972 – William Kelly Simpson, New York, June 1979.

**Exhibitions:** London, New Gallery, 1905, no. 263 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1960-61, no. 740, (ill.) – Tokyo-Kyoto, 1961-62, no. 246 (ill.) – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-64, no. 312 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 54 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 104 (ill.) – New York, Wilden-

stein, 1983, p. 88 – Katonah, Katonah Gallery, 1989, no. 9 (col. ill.) – Houston-Washington D.C.-Brooklyn, 1989-90, no. 92 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Leclère 1920, p. 98 (ill.) – Escholier 1937, p. 18 (ill.) – Chastel 1946, p. 43 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 84, 87 (ill.); and 1948c, pl. 20 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 35-37, 79, 94, 96, 129 – Fels 1950, p. 88 (ill.) – Charensol 1955, pl. 7 – Vaillant 1956, p. 27 (ill.) – Wichmann 1962, pp. 354-357, fig. 4 – Russoli 1966, col. pl. 8 – Barilli 1967c, p. 127 (col. ill.) – Dugdale 1967a, col. pl. 11 – Muller 1967, p. 36 (ill.) – Salomon 1968, pp. 72, 73 (col. ill.) – *Jardin des arts*, no. 161, April 1968, p. 76 (ill.) – Negri 1970, col. pl. 38 – Gold and Fizdale 1980, p. 114 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, pp. 72-73 – Daniel 1984, pp. 81, 84, fig. 22 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 254-255, fig. 121 – Kelder 1986, p. 212, col. fig. 223 – Thomson 1988, col. ill. as frontispiece – Warnod 1988, p. 50 (col. ill.) – Easton 1989, pp. 118, 125 – Rishel, travelling exhib. cat., United States, 1989-91, p. 112, fig. 170 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, p. 280 (col. ill.) – Bernier 1991, p. 67 (col. ill.) – Newman 1991, p. 12, fig. 3 – Forgione 1992, pp. 259-260, fig. 90 – Cogeval 1993b, p. 52 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, pp. 85-86, col. fig. 144.

This composition, which is neither a portrait, nor a genre scene, nor a glimpse of private life, is based on the rhetorical figure of the chiasmus. The attitudes of the two protagonists are directed outside the picture: the persons they are speaking to, and to whom their gazes are drawn, are located somewhere beyond the frame. One just barely discerns Thadée in conversation with Vallotton, in profile on the far left. There is nothing quite like this composition in painting of the 1890s; it is the sort of image more readily deciphered in terms of *Nouvelle Vague* cinema or the *Nouveau Roman*. The framing could hardly be less classical; the subject of the picture is *what happens* to the subject. As for Thadée, he is simply a 'non-presence' here. With the help of photography, Vuillard was evidently beginning to attain to a freer vision of reality; he was acquiring the capacity to take reality as it came. The profiles of the two main figures are contrasted on two different planes (Vallotton's is presented against the backdrop of *The Stoneware Vase*, V-96.5), and the detail of the dog tugging at Misia's dress calls Bonnard to mind. Nowhere is Misia more beautiful than in this elaborate, elegant composition.

The scene was long thought to be set in the Natanson's apartment in the rue Saint-Florentin, doubtless because of the wallpaper. The 'Thadées', however, are known to have taken

the five panels of *The Album* (V-96.1 to V-96.5) with them on their holidays and to have papered several rooms at Le Relais with Misia's favourite floral pattern. Though none of Vuillard or Fred Athis's photographs actually confirm the presence of this particular wallpaper at Villeneuve, various details suggest that the picture represents a holiday scene: the presence of the dog, more plausible in the country than in the city (we see it in *Misia at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne*, VI-54, and in many of Vuillard's photographs), the silk scarf around Misia's neck, the plain style of the furniture



E. V. Misia and her dog, photograph. Private collection.

and, above all, Vallotton's blue work-jacket, which he also wears in *Vallotton with a Rose* (VI-65) and *Félix Vallotton in His Studio* (VI-104). (The fastidious Swiss gentleman would



E. V., preparatory drawing for *Misia and Vallotton*, graphite on paper, 17.6 × 11 cm. Private collection.

never have inflicted such a jacket on a Parisian salon.) Several of Vuillard's photographs taken at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne (see ill.) show Misia wearing precisely the same clothes and always accompanied by her dog. All of these details combine to create the impression of a cool autumn morning in Bur-



VI-72

gundy, with a sky dappled with fleecy clouds in the background.

## VI-72 Profile of Toulouse-Lautrec with a Felt Hat

1897-99

Oil on cardboard, 25.5 × 23.2 cm

Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*

Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi (France), inv. MTS I.26

**Provenance:** Maurice Denis, Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France), 1908 – Purchased by Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi, 1939, subject to usufruct – Maurice Denis until his death, 1943 – Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi, 1943.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Grand Palais, 1926, no. 2814 – Paris, Druet, 1930, no. 96 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1931, no. 294 – Paris, Galerie Beaux-Arts, 1934, no. 166 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 61 – Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1947, no. 245 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1947, no. 252 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1951, pl. 1 – Paris, Charpentier, 1952, no. 100b – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 38 [*Au feutre mou*] – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 37 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 32.

**Bibliography:** Joyant 1926, ill. as frontispiece; and 1927, p. 248 – Mack 1938, pp. 258-259 – Salomon 1945, pp. 32-33 – Chastel 1946, p. 41 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 55, 83-84 – Charles-Bellet 1951, no. 203, p. 17 (ill.) – Julien 1952, p. 163, no. 203, pl. 1 – Vallentin 1952, p. 25 (ill.) – Cooper 1955b, p. 13 (ill.) – Salomon 1961, pp. 51-52 (ill.) – Vergnet-Ruiz and Laclotte 1962, pp. 198, 256 – Barilli 1967a, p. 76 (ill.) – Lapeyre 1967, pp. 22 (ill.), 160, 182 – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 42 – Salomon 1968, p. 76 (ill.) – Frèches-Thory, exhib. cat., London-Paris, 1991-92, p. 568, fig. 207.

I accept that Lautrec, who abhorred hypocrisy, should have gone shamelessly seeking real-life subjects wherever they happened to exist. But there [were] above all moral causes for his conduct. A refined aristocrat, but cut off from his [social] milieu by his grotesque physique, Lautrec – too proud to be resigned – discerned in the moral wretchedness of those creatures a sympathetic connection with his own fall from grace. They were, moreover, the only female company he had access to, and he was attracted by the naïve working-class sentimentality of the girls who confided in him. He even ended up boarding for some months in one of those houses in the rue d'Amboise, with his friend C..., who could tell a great deal more about it than I can.



'There was an under-current of despair in Lautrec, which explains the apparent cynicism of that remarkably discriminating man who gave himself entirely to drunken debauchery. He never sobered up. He would wander around the whole night long, from cabaret to dance-hall and to café, always followed by his clique, for he was never alone. His two main bodyguards were Maxime Dethomas and Coolus, who stuck to him like leeches and would take him home when he was in no state to do so alone. I cannot understand his continual drunkenness, save as a kind of suicide. Art too was a means of escape for him. What always struck me about this man who spoke only in cheeky and cynical terms was the serious tone of his voice whenever he spoke about painting; to him it was a genuine FAITH.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bazin 1931, pp. 141-142.

## VI-73

### Toulouse-Lautrec Cooking at the Natansons' at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne

1897-99

Oil on cardboard, 39 × 30 cm

Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*

Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi (France), inv. MTL I.25

**Provenance:** Maurice Joyant, Paris, c. 1914 – Donation from Maurice Joyant to the Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1931, no. 295 – Toulouse, Augustins, 1941 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1942, no. 103 – Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1947, no. 246 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1947, no. 195 – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1947, no. 253 – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 39 [*Portrait de Toulouse-Lautrec, en ciré, faisant la cuisine*] – Philadelphia-Chicago, 1956, no. 247 (ill.) – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 53 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 78 (ill.) – New Brunswick, The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1985-86, p. 182, no. 177 (ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, no. 74, p. 16 (col. ill.) – Lausanne, 2000-01, no. 29, p. 18 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Joyant 1927, p. 248; and 1930, as frontispiece – Mack 1938, pp. 258-259 – Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 84 – Charles-Bellet 1951, no. 103 – Natanson 1951, p. 177 – *Art News Annual* 20, 1951, p. 85 (ill.) – Julien 1952, p. 163,



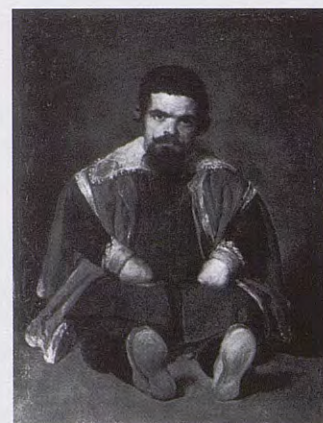
VI-73

no. 103 – Roger-Marx 1954b, col. ill. (frontispiece) – Schweicher 1955, pl. 17 – *Illustrated London News*, 8 Dec. 1956 (ill.) – Chassé 1960, pl. 25 – Vergnet-Ruiz and Laclotte 1962, pp. 186 (ill.), 198, 256, fig. 216 – Lapeyre 1963, pp. 149, 175, fig. 20, no. 356 – Barilli 1967c, p. 126 (col. ill.) – Lapeyre 1967, pp. 160, 182, fig. 21 – Platte 1967, pp. 129 (col. ill.), 144 – Roger-Marx 1968, p. 42 – *Le Spectacle du monde*, no. 78, Sept. 1968, p. 106 (ill.) – Preston 1971, fig. 28 – Gold and Fildale 1980, p. 68 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 280-282, fig. 145 – Bernier 1991, p. 155 (col. ill.) – Roquebert, exhib. cat., London-Paris, 1991-92, pp. 101-111 (ill.), 112-115, 539, fig. 680.

Won over by the innocent delights of a holiday, Toulouse-Lautrec – well-known for his

illustrations of menus – briefly gave up his drinking and debauchery and dedicated himself to one of his favourite pastimes: cooking country meals. If one is to believe Thadée Natanson, who recalls Lautrec occasionally cooking lobster in the kitchen at Le Relais, this painting was executed on a stormy day after the artist had braved the elements clad 'in a tiny yellow oil-cloth sou-wester, a yellow brighter than any lemon'.<sup>1</sup> He adds that Lautrec 'did not get drunk even once... He was up early, late to bed, working, drawing, dazzling everyone with his remarks'.<sup>2</sup> This portrayal is one of the most popular pictures in

Vuillard's œuvre, doubtless because of the model's identity. A homage from one great painter to another, it alludes obliquely to a number of models drawn from the Old Masters, especially Velázquez and his celebrated portraits of dwarfs (see ill.), the seventeenth-century *Bamboccianti* who delighted in droll



Diego Velázquez, *Portrait of a Dwarf Seated on the Ground*, c. 1645, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid.

depictions of everyday trivia, and – closer to Vuillard – such nineteenth-century realists as Théodule Ribot. Here Vuillard depicts with great freshness a moment of happiness among friends during a holiday that enchanted everyone concerned. In a letter dated 20 July 1897, he commented upon Lautrec's conversion to simpler pleasures: 'Lautrec is here and is beginning to wind down, though not without with an occasional snarl; but we mustn't despair: he has good moments and is genuinely fond of Thadée and his wife.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Natanson 1951, p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> Guisan and Jakubec 1973, p. 156.

## VI-74

### The Conversation (Alfred Natanson and Marthe Mellot)

1897-99

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 54 × 67.5 cm

Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*

Private collection, New York

**Provenance:** Jos Hessel, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris – Rodrigues-Henriques, Paris – Sam Salz, New

York – Nate B. Spingold, New York, c. 1954 – Promise of donation to The Museum of Modern Art, New York – Spingold sale, Sotheby's, London, 29 Nov. 1976, lot 9 (col. ill.) – Private collection, New York.

**Exhibitions:** Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 68 (col. ill.), 102, and on cover – New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1955, p. 21; and Oct.-Nov. 1958, p. 50 – New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, June 1960 – New York-Waltham, 1962, no. 69 (ill.) – New York, Wildenstein, Oct.-Nov. 1964, no. 26 (ill.) – New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1967, no. 110.

**Bibliography:** Leclère 1920, p. 97 (ill.) – *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* 22, no. 4, summer 1955, p. 15 (ill.) – Vaillant 1956, p. 32 (ill.) – *The Museum of Modern Art Bulletin* 26, no. 1, 1958, p. 50 (ill.) – *Art News* 59, no. 2, April 1960, p. 32 (ill.) – *The Burlington Magazine* 102, no. 686, May 1960, p. 227 (ill.) – Preston 1971, pp. 108, 109 (col. ill.) – Daniel 1984, pp. 134, 139, fig. 50.

**Description:** *The scene is set at Thadée Natanson's house in Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, where we can see the same furniture brought from Albi by Toulouse-Lautrec that features in the portrait of Misia and other paintings of this period.* (JS)

Alfred Natanson (Athis) and Marthe Mellot long remained close friends of Vuillard. Asso-

ciated with the avant-garde stance of *La Revue Blanche* in the 1890s – Marthe Mellot starred in Ibsen's plays – their presence here foreshadows the more bourgeois and mundane atmosphere of the holidays Vuillard was to spend with the Hessels and the Arons in Normandy and Brittany. The sense of humour that united the couple comes across as plainly in this double portrait as in a witty snapshot taken by the artist during one of his Villeneuve summers (see ill.), in which the 'Freds' adopt the poses of actors from the Comédie-Française.



E. V., Marthe Mellot and Alfred Natanson in the garden at Le Relais, photograph. Private collection.



VI-74





VI-75

## VI-75 Portrait of Cipa Godebski

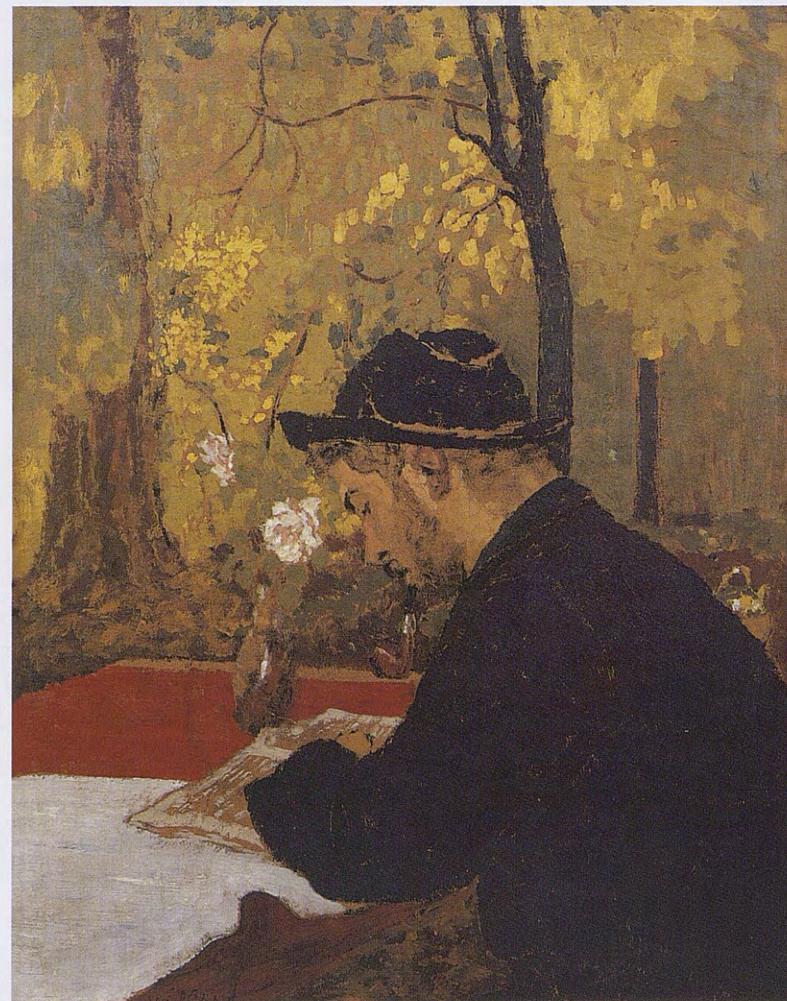
1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 27 × 25 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Berne, Kunsthalle, 1946, no. 16 (ill.) – Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1946, no. 45 – Paris, Marcel Rochas, 1949-50, no. 64 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 34 (ill.) – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1960, no. 26 (ill.) – Paris, Durand-Ruel, 1961, no. 19 (ill.) – Paris, L'Œil, 1963, no. 7 (ill.) – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 30 (ill.) – London, Lefevre, 1964, no. 5 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 46 – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 76 (ill.)

**Bibliography:** Salomon 1961, pp. 64-65 (ill.) – L'Œil, no. 100, April 1963, p. 25 (ill.) – Mauner 1978, pp. 267-268, fig. 153 – Daniel 1984, p. 134, fig. 52.

**Description:** A three-quarter portrait of Cipa sporting a black hat, its crown flush with the top edge of the picture frame, and a thin black beard. A horizontal white band bisecting the grey-green background sets off the hues of his shirt and his pink-tinted face. (AC)



VI-76

## VI-76 Man with a Pipe (Cipa Godebski)

1897-98  
Oil on cardboard, backed on canvas,  
65 × 52 cm  
Signed, upper left: *Vuillard*  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Jos Hessel, Paris, 1898, 200 F – Léon Delaroche, Paris, 1934 – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Brussels, [La Libre Esthétique], 1904, no. 187 – Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1932, no. 135 [*Cipa lisant*, 1895-1900] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1933, no. 343 – London, Tooth & Sons, 1934, no. 22 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 50 [*L'Homme à la pipe*] – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 77 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Bernard 1930, p. 24 (ill.) – Besson 1934a, fig. 59 – George 1938a, p. 28 (ill.) – Chastel 1946, p. 39 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 55, 83-84, 86 (ill.), 89; and 1948c, pl. 21 – Mercanton 1949, col. pl. 7 – Raynal 1949, p. 100 (col. ill.) – Vaillant 1956, p. 32 (ill.) – Roger-Marx 1968,

p. 42 – Salomon 1968, p. 82, 83 (ill.) – Daniel 1984, p. 134, fig. 51.

**Description:** Side view of Cipa seated in a garden, his head bent over a newspaper, his elbows resting on a table with a red cloth partly covered by a white napkin. His jacket and hat are black, while the cardboard support is used to indicate the creases in the latter. Greenish-yellow foliage and reddish-brown tree-trunks. (JS)

This is the most consummate of all Vuillard's portraits of Misia's half-brother, here seen smoking his inevitable pipe in the garden of Le Relais and reading a newspaper. Thadée Natanson never missed an opportunity to gibe at Cipa's legendary indolence and to bestow snide nicknames on him: '*Chietrop* continues superbly to do nothing. He eats and yawns.'<sup>1</sup> The profile of the face is worked in great detail. The vegetation that serves as a background has an almost fairy-tale quality and is treated in a manner that would become typical of Vuillard's major compositions at the turn of the century (cf. *Landscapes of the Île-de-France*, VII-63 and VII-64). During one of his holidays at Villeneuve, Vuillard took a full-length photographic portrait of Cipa (see ill.).



E. V., Cipa Godebski at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, c. 1897-99, photograph. Private collection.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Thadée Natanson to Félix Vallotton, 28 July 1897, in Guisan and Jakubec 1975b, p. 11. '*Chietrop*' is a vulgarity that might be rendered as '*Shitator*'.

## VI-77 Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, Le Relais Seen from the Entrance to the Garden

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 41 × 29.5 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E Vuillard*  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Wildenstein, New York – Emil Georg Bührle, Zurich (Switzerland), 1952 – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Exhibitions:** Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 71 – London, Wildenstein, June 1948, no. 16 – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, no. 29 – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 197 – Albi, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, 1951, no. 336 – Berne, Kunsthalle, 1951 – Zurich, Kunsthaus, 1958, no. 264 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1958-59, no. 170 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 28.

**Bibliography:** Natanson 1948b, p. 242 (ill.) – Schweicher 1955, col. pl. 1 – Platte 1967, p. 132 (col. ill.).

**Description:** A front view of Le Relais, seen under a blue sky with a few large, white passing clouds. The walls are ochre and the white shutters closed. Two light-coloured chimneys break up the expanse of the red roof. A sort of trellis screens the ground floor. The high wall with a green trellis in the left foreground, its base hidden by a grassy green mound, is counterbalanced on the right by the dark-green foliage of a chestnut tree dotted with red flowers. Orange and bright-red tones of a bank of flowers near the centre. (JS)

Often mistaken for a view of Mallarmé's house at Valvins, this painting actually depicts Le Relais. This is confirmed by several photographs taken by Vuillard between 1897 and



VI-77

1899, including one with Félix Vallotton and Gabrielle Rodrigues-Henriques, who were married on 10 May 1899 (see ill.). The composition of the painting is uncannily prophet-



E. V., Félix Vallotton and Gabrielle Rodrigues-Henriques at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, 1899, photograph. Private collection.

ic of some of the views of the château of Les Clayes that the artist was to execute more than forty years later during his last strollings in the park (see XII-359).





VI-78

**VI-78**  
**Cipa, Marthe Mellot**  
**and Misia in the Garden**  
**at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne**

1897-99  
 Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
 panel, 44 × 49 cm  
 Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
 Private collection

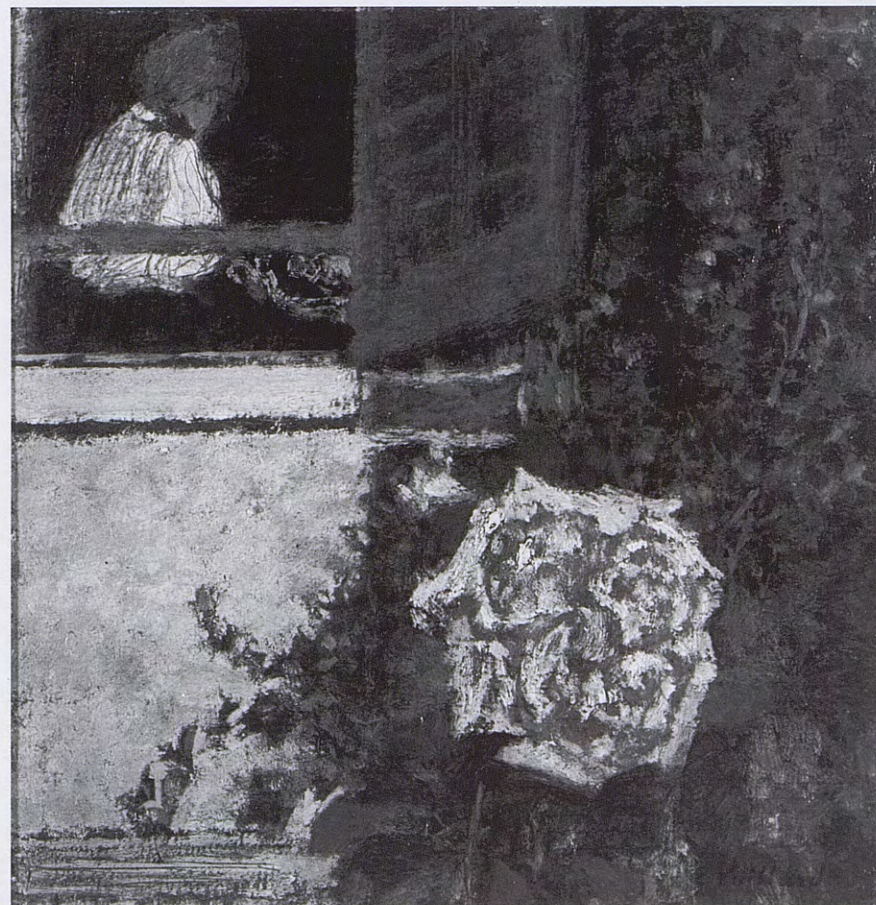
**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Ambroise  
 Vollard, Paris (stock no. 3592), c. 1899, 175 F –  
 Arthur Tooth & Sons, London – Percy Moore  
 Turner, London, 1942 – Mayor, London, 1948  
 – André Maus, Geneva – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** London, National Gallery, 1942-  
 1943, no. 70a – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Acad-  
 emy, 1948, no. 86 (ill.) [*Tristan Bernard in*  
*Vuillard's Garden*, 1905] – London, Wildenstein,  
 June 1948, no. 27 (ill.) [*Tristan Bernard in*  
*Vuillard's Garden*] – Paris, Charpentier, June-Oct.  
 1954, no. 181 (ill.) – Geneva, Athénée, 1960,  
 no. 103 – Geneva, Krugier, 1969, no. 87 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Rewald 1952, p. 274, fig. 7.

**Description:** Facing us near the centre of the com-  
 position is Cipa, perched on a folding stool on a green  
 lawn, wearing his black felt hat and holding up a  
 walking-stick. Above him is a patch of cloudy blue  
 sky, and, to the right, in the shade of some shrub-  
 bery, two women, one clad in black and kneeling at

the feet of the other, who is wearing a light-coloured  
 blouse and is bent over a book. This is probably the  
 same garden that inspired Vuillard's decorative pan-  
 els for Claude Anet, in which Bonnard is seen seat-  
 ed outside a house whose facade recalls the edge of  
 the house on the left. (JS)



VI-79

**VI-79**  
**Flower and Young Woman**  
**Seen through a Window**

1897-99  
 Oil on cardboard, 24 × 23 cm  
 Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
 Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Suzanne Deutsch de la Meurthe,  
 France – Jacques Heilbronner, Paris – Barreiro, Paris  
 – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 11 March 1948,  
 lot 70 (ill.) – Edwin D. Hewitt, New York – Sale,  
 Sotheby's, New York, 12 Nov. 1953, lot 47 (ill.)  
 – Schoneman, New York – H. H. Ridder, Cali-  
 fornia – Carroll Carstairs, New York – John Koch,  
 New York – Current whereabouts unknown.



VI-80

**VI-80**  
**Coffee in the Garden**  
**(Cipa and Misia)**

1897-98  
 Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
 panel, 23.5 × 26.5 cm  
 Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
 Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Paul Gallimard, Paris, 1898 – Cas-  
 sirer, Berlin, 1929 – Jacob Israel, Paris – Wilden-  
 stein, New York, 1951 – George N. Richard, New  
 York – Richard sale, Christie's, New York, 14 Nov.  
 1989, lot 17 (col. ill.), bought in – Current where-  
 abouts unknown.

**Bibliography:** Argencourt 1999, no. 220, pp. 630,  
 631 (col. ill.).

**VI-81**  
**Afternoon Tea (study)**

1897-99  
 Oil on cardboard, 39 × 51 cm  
 Stamp 1, lower right  
 Art market, Switzerland

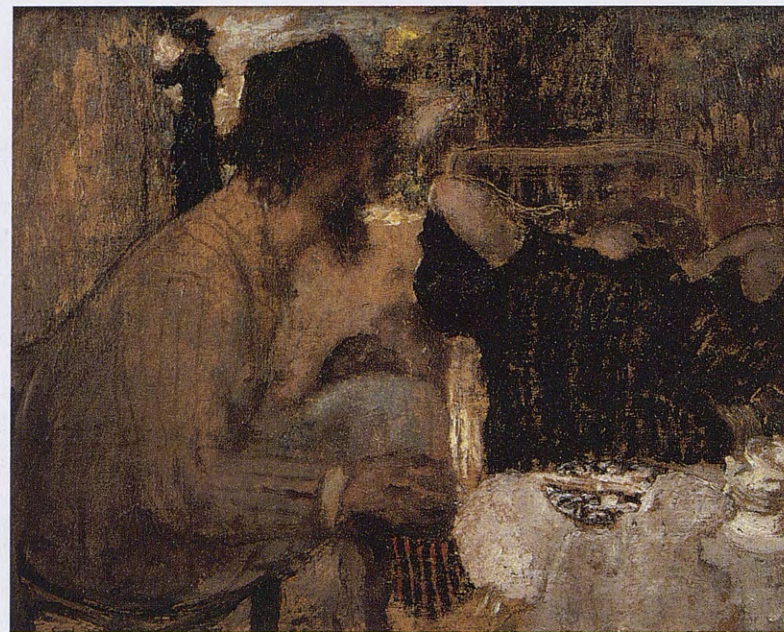
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Mouradian et Vallot-  
 ton, Paris, 1951 – Paul Vallotton, Lausanne  
 (Switzerland) – Alfred Scherz, Berne, 1951 – Sale,  
 Sotheby's, London, 7 Dec. 1978, lot 525 (ill.) – Dr  
 Anton C.R. Dreesman, Amsterdam – Sale, Christie's,  
 London, 9 April 2002, lot 105 (col. ill.) – Galerie  
 Jan Krugier, Ditesheim & Cie, Geneva.

**Exhibition:** Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 18 [*La*  
*Conversation*].



VI-81





VI-82

### VI-82 Afternoon Tea – I

1897-99  
Oil on panel, 31.8 × 40.6 cm  
Inscribed, lower left: *E. V.*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Étienne Bignou, Paris – Jean Davray, Paris, 1945 – Private collection.

**Bibliography:** Cooper 1963, p. 261 (ill.).

A snapshot taken by Alfred Athis at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne (see ill.) catches Misia in a relaxed attitude, with her little dog next to her (cf. *Misia and Vallotton at Villeneuve*, VI-71). Vuillard will have been inspired by a similar pose while working on *Le Gouter*, which depicts a kind of 'non-conversation' between Bonnard and Misia.



Alfred (Athis) Natanson, *Misia in the garden at Le Relais*, c. 1898-99, photograph. Private collection.



VI-83

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Charpentier, 1948 (not in cat.) – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 70 (ill.) [*Conversation (Cipa and Misia Godebski)*], 102.

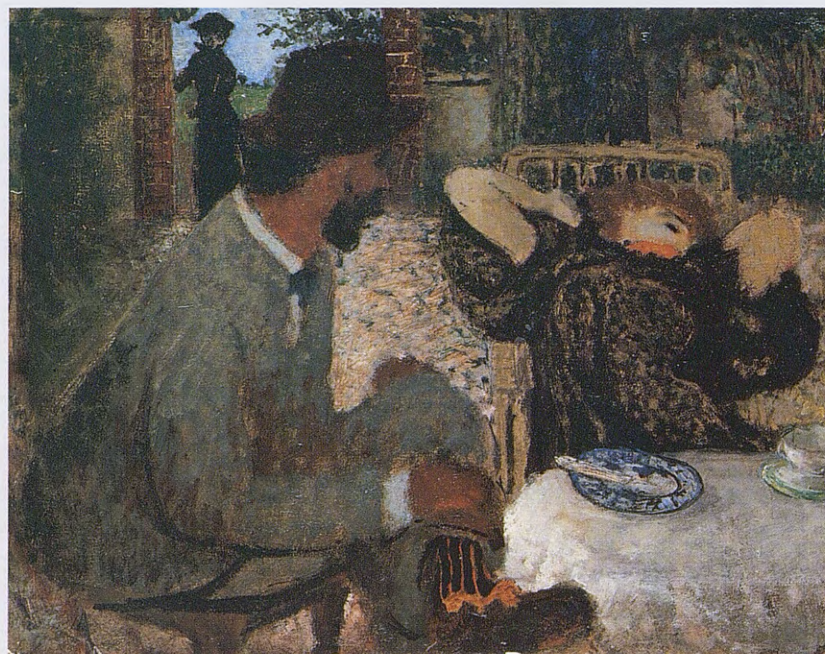
### VI-84 Afternoon Tea – III

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 37 × 48 cm  
Inscribed on rear: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Gustave Leven, Paris – Private collection.

**Bibliography:** Cooper 1963, p. 252 (ill.) [identified as being Jean Davray's version].

**Description:** To the left is Bonnard, seen in three-quarter profile, seated before a cleared table and gazing at Misia, who is leaning back in a wicker chair on the right, her hands behind her neck. At top left, the silhouette of a young woman in a straw boater stands out sharply against the sky. (JS)



VI-84



VI-85

### VI-85 White Clouds, Villeneuve-sur-Yonne

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 24 × 32 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sale, Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 22 Dec. 1948 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** A dark-blue sky above dark-green countryside. The outlines of the fluffy white clouds have been emphasized with the wooden tip of the brush. Intermediate tones for the houses in the foreground (mauve roofs, grey walls). (JS)

### VI-86 Landscape, Villeneuve-sur-Yonne

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, mounted to cradled panel, 18.5 × 25 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Collection of Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon, 1995.47.14

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Arthur Tooth & Sons, London, c. 1952 – Sam Salz, New York, 1953 – Paul Mellon, United States – Mellon gift to the National Gallery of Art, 1995.



VI-86

**Exhibitions:** London, Tooth & Sons, 1952, no. 1 – Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1966, no. 177 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Preston 1971, fig. 8.

### VI-87 The Road

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 17.5 × 33 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, Japan

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Richard Heyd, Neuchâtel (Switzerland) – Fred Uhler, Neuchâtel – Private collection – Sale, Ketterer Kunst, Munich, 6 June 1994, lot 309 (ill.), bought in – JPL Fine Arts, London and Salis, Salzburg – Private collection, Japan, 1994.

**Exhibitions:** Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 196 – Neuchâtel, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, 1956, no. 188; and 1975, no. 102.

**Description:** A red road cutting straight through the countryside, with a green meadow with grey stakes in the foreground. Alternating light- and dark-grey bands on the horizon, red roofs and light-grey sky. The handling of the scenery conveys a strong decorative effect. (AC)



VI-87





VI-88

## VI-88 The Vineyard

c. 1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 24 × 28 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Alex Maguy, Paris – Klopfer Fine Art, Sevgein, 1994.

**Description:** A patch of vineyard, with rows of reddish-brown vine stocks across the light-coloured earth. Touches of green on the left and in the leaves of the trees. A rough sketch with pencilling plainly visible. (AC)

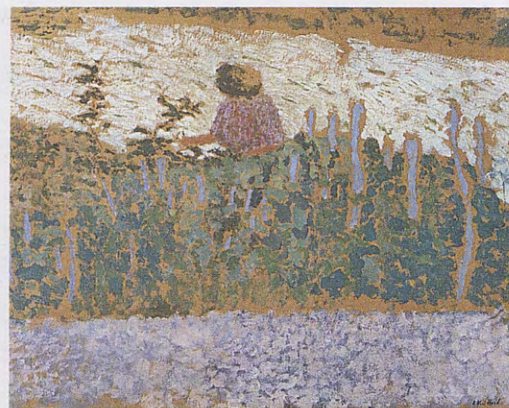
## VI-89 Woman in a Vineyard

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 48 × 61.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Georges Maratier, Paris, 1944 – Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 12 May 1950, lot 42 – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 17 March 1981, lot 54 (col. ill.) – JPL Fine Arts and its successor, Neffe-Degandt Fine Art, London.

**Exhibitions:** – Paddington, Stadia Graphics Gallery, 1981, no. 1, col. ill. on cover – Melbourne, Tolarno Galleries, 1981, no. 2 (ill.) – London, JPL, 1984, no. 40 (col. ill.) – Salzburg, Salis, 1985, no. 20 (col. ill.).

**Description:** The head and bust of a woman in a mauve blouse, silhouetted against a white field scored with the handle of the brush. The brown cardboard support shows throughout, especially at the top. (AC)



VI-90

## VI-90 Woman in a Garden

c. 1899  
Turpentine-based paint on paper mounted on canvas, 64 × 41.4 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 22 June 1955, lot 55 – George Embiricos, Lausanne (Switzerland) – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 6 February 2001, lot 108 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown

**Exhibition:** London, Marlborough, 1954, no. 72.



VI-91



VI-91

**Description:** Surrounded by vegetation, a young woman in dark green stands out against a group of light-green trees under a blue sky. A quick sketch. (AC)

## VI-91 Two Women in the Countryside

1897-99  
Oil on paper, mounted on canvas, 36 × 40 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Art market, London

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – O'Hana, London – Sale, Christie's, London, 27 March 1973, lot 19 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Christie's, London, 7 Dec. 1973, lot 192 (ill.), bought in – Sale, Sotheby's, London, 2 July 1980, lot 117 (col. ill.) – James Kirkman Gallery, London.

**Exhibitions:** London, O'Hana, 1968 (not in cat.) – Sandton, Goodman, 1981, p. 92 (col. ill.).

**Description:** The busts of two women seen from behind against a somewhat curious landscape consisting of large blocks of green trees beneath a dark-blue sky. The first woman wears a checked dress and a large black hat; the second, a yellow dress and a straw hat with a black ribbon. (JS)



VI-92

## VI-92 The Rowboat Outing

1897  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 51 × 74.5 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right: *E Vuillard 97*  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1977-385

**Provenance:** Maurice Fabre, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 14766, *En barque*), 26 Dec. 1905, in exchange for a painting by Bonnard [D. 1965-74, no. 165] – Alexandre Natanson, Paris, 1908 – Alexandre Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16 May 1929, lot 113 (ill.) – Albert-Sancholle Henraux, Paris, 112,000 F; Mme Sanchez Abreu, Paris – Donation to the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1948; transferred to Musée du Louvre (Palais de Tokyo), Paris; transferred to Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 1986.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 43 – Paris, Galerie Beaux-Arts, 1934, no. 154 – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 49 [*En barque sur la Seine, par un ciel orangeux*] – Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, 1939, no. 139 – Liège-Ghent-Luxembourg, 1948, no. 21 [*Le Passeur*] – Lyons, Beaux-Arts, 1949, no. 131 – Rennes, Hôtel de Ville, 1951, no. 59 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, p. 102, p. 61 (ill.) [*The Ferryman*] – Berlin, Akademie der Künste, 1956 – Frankfurt-Luxembourg, 1956,

no. 93 – Saint-Étienne, Musée d'Art et d'Industrie, 1956 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 35 – Warsaw-Cracow, 1959, no. 26 (ill.) – Caen, Maison de la Culture, 1963 – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-64, no. 311 – Paris, Palais Galliera, 1969 – Lyons-Barcelona, 1990-91, no. 70, p. 83 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 158 – Dorival 1949a, p. 37, fig. 1 – Troendle 1949, p. 172 (ill.) – Cassou, Dorival and Homolle 1954, p. 164 – Dorival 1961, p. 36 – Salomon 1961, p. 57 (ill.) – Preston 1971, fig. 10 – Compin and Roquebert 1986, p. 282 (ill.) – Compin, Lacambre and Roquebert 1990, p. 479 (ill.) – Bernier 1991, p. 300 (col. ill.).

Probably painted in October 1897, at the end of Vuillard's first holiday at Thadée and Misia's house at Villeneuve (the browns and golds of the poplars on the banks of the Yonne show that summer is drawing to a close), this picture is distinctly Impressionist in approach. The complementary nature of the colours – the sky's bluish-purple, the orange trees – is manifest; still more pronounced is the essentially 'photographic' nature of the composition. Armed with a Kodak camera, Vuillard was taking his first pictures at this time: a snapshot of 1899 (see ill.), taken from the towpath, shows the same row of poplars along the Yonne. This composition is worked out in great detail in a preliminary sketch (see ill.).

The figure has traditionally been identified as Cipa Godebski; however, he could also be Stéphane Natanson (see *The Stéphane Natanson Screen*, VI-101).



E. V., poplars on the bank of the Yonne river, 1899, photograph. Private collection.



E. V., preparatory drawing for *The Rowboat Outing*, graphite on paper, 11 × 13.8 cm. Private collection.





VI-93

### VI-93 The Lady in the Fields

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 54 × 67 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Thadée Natanson, Paris – Thadée Natanson sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 13 June 1908, lot 44 [*La Dame aux champs*] – Louis Bernard for 520 F – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 27 Feb. 1909, lot 64 – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 17169), 505 F – Vuillard reacquired it on 13 Oct. 1919, in exchange for VII-48 – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Brussels, Musée de Peinture Moderne, 1910, no. 191 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Feb. 1911,

no. 21 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 36 (ill.) – Paris, L'Œil, 1963, no. 4 – Hamburg-Frankfurt-Zurich, 1964, no. 31 (ill.) – London, Lefevre, 1964, no. 3 – Paris, Maeght, 1966, no. 53 – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 42 (ill.) – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1973, no. 7 – Japan, travelling exhib., 1977-78, no. 19 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, pp. 63-64 – Groom 1993, pp. 139, 152, col. fig. 221.

The time is early autumn (the leaves are not yet tinged with yellow as in *The Rowboat Outing*, VI-92). Misia, clad in the same outfit as in the double portrait with Vallotton (VI-71), is lingering in a field while two of her friends have already gone on ahead. Chastel was particularly fond of this 'land-

scape of tightly knit harmonies', with its subtle multiplicity of colours producing 'a counterpoint [that] divides and spreads throughout the composition, which it embraces and binds together with apparent effortlessness'. Vuillard presents us here with a discreet, *intimiste* version of a German *Einfüllung*, in which a person close to the artist communes with nature. Countless examples depicting this type of philosophical bond are to be found in German Romantic painting, particularly in the work of Ludwig von Hofmann, Max Klinger and Richard Riemerschmid (see ill.), a near contemporary of Vuillard. In choosing to frame the top and bottom of



Richard Riemerschmid,  
*In the Open*, 1895,  
oil on canvas.  
Städtische Galerie im  
Lenbachhaus, Munich.

the composition with a decorative border of flowers, a device he would later employ in his large panels, *The First Fruit* and *Window with a View onto the Woods* (VII-63 and VII-64), the artist ties this extremely free composition to the nascent Art Nouveau movement. The studied elaborateness of the colours was no doubt meant to impress discriminating art-lovers like Félix Fénéon: 'A blending in two colours of the most delicate tones with the strongest accents. Predominance of ruby-red and emerald-green. Yellows embellish greens, blacks [embellish] reds. Whites [evenly] distributed throughout. One particular harmony, struck from pale-blue, yellow and pink highlighted with vermillion, is used for emphasis.'<sup>1</sup>

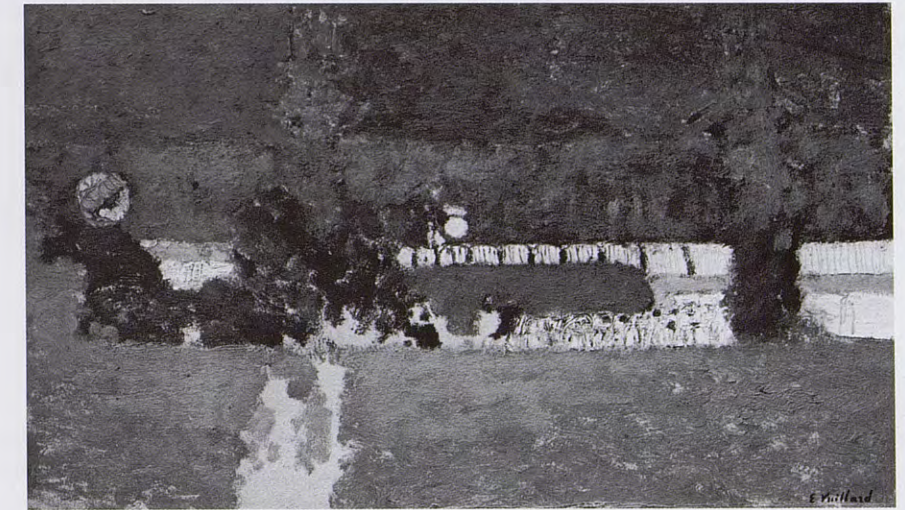
<sup>1</sup> Fénéon 1970, vol. I, p. 256.

### VI-94 Beneath the Trees

c. 1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on canvas,  
48.5 × 63.5 cm  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Léon Delaroche, Paris; Mme Lignel (née Delaroche), Paris – André Weil, Paris – E. V. Thaw, New York – Stephen Hahn, New York – Sale, Christie's, New York, 19 Nov. 1998, lot 191 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 40 (ill.).



VI-95

### VI-95 Enigmatic Landscape at Villeneuve (?)

1900  
Oil on cardboard, 27 × 45 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – O'Hana, London – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 25 May 1963, lot 43 (col. ill.), bought in – Krugier, Geneva – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** London, O'Hana, 1962, no. 60 (ill.); and 1963, no. 57 (ill.) – Geneva, Krugier, 1969, no. 83 (ill.) – New York, Loeb and Krugier, 1969, no. 85 (ill.).



VI-94





VI-96

### VI-96 Misia in a Wood

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 42.1 × 56 cm  
Signed, upper left: *E Vuillard*  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Alexandre Natanson, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 20141), 13 Jan. 1914, 1,250 F – Gaston Bernheim de Villers, Paris, from the Bernheim-Jeune estate in 1932; Mme R. Mosnier (née Bernheim de Villers), Paris –

Galerie Berès, Paris – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 1 May 1996, lot 35 (col. ill.), bought in.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Nov. 1908, no. 44 – San Francisco, unknown location, 1915, no. 518 – New York, Knoedler, 1931, no. 39 (ill.) – Paris, Petit Palais, 1937, salle 15, no. 30 [*À la lisière du bois*] – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 64 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 44 – St. Tropez, 2000, no. 30, p. 100 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Groom 1993, pp. 152-153, col. fig. 242.



VI-97

### VI-97 Under the Parasol

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 25 × 16 cm  
Stamp 1, upper left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1942 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Düsseldorf, Kunsthalle, 1956, no. 20 (ill.).

### VI-98 Small Study of Marthe Mellot for *Woman Reading on a Bench*

1898  
Oil on cardboard, 11.7 × 10.5 cm  
Stamp 4, lower left  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Private collection.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1990, no. 126 (col. ill.).

**Description:** Side view of a seated woman with voluminous black hair, wearing a black and white cashmere dress and surrounded by plump cushions. (AC)



VI-99.2

### VI-99.1 and VI-99.2 The Garden of Le Relais at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne

Two decorative panels for Jean Schopfer  
1898

**Common provenance:** Commissioned from Vuillard by Jean Schopfer (*nom de plume*: Claude Anet), Paris, for 900 F; Mme Jean Schopfer, 1902 – Prince Emmanuel Bibesco, Paris, c. 1908; Prince Antoine Bibesco, Paris – The Hon. James Dugdale, Yorkshire (Great Britain), 1951-86; on loan to the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth (Texas) – Beadleston, New York – Private collection, Switzerland.

**Common exhibitions:** Paris, Grand Palais, 1905, nos. 1595-1596 – Berlin, Ausstellungshaus am Kurfürstendamm, 1906, no. 295 (ill.) – Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, nos. 53a-b [*a/ Femme lisant sur un banc, dans un jardin, au milieu d'autres personnages; b/ Femme assise sur un fauteuil, dans un jardin, au milieu d'autres personnages*] – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, nos. 68-69 (ill.) – London, Wildenstein, June 1948, nos. 14-15 (ill.) – Paris, Charpentier, 1948, nos. 26, 28 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 20, 66-67 (ill.), 102.

**Common bibliography:** *Kunst* 21, no. 18, 15 June 1906, p. 426 (ill.) – Segard 1914, pp. 279, 280 (ill.), 281-288 – *Beaux-Arts*, no. 278, 29 April 1938, p. 3 (ill.) – *Le Figaro littéraire*, 30 April 1938 (ill.) – Hourticq 1939, p. 19 (col. ill.) – Salomon 1945, p. 41 – Chastel 1946, pp. 53, 90 – Roger-Marx 1946a, pp. 53, 55, 127-128, 131-132 (ill., *Réunion familiale dans un jardin normand*), 137; and 1948c, pp. 15-16, col. pl. 1, 15 – Sutton 1948, p. 249 (ill.) – *Country Life*, 2 July 1948, fig. 3 – Schweicher 1949, pp. 79-83, 105, 114 – Rewald 1953, pp. 29 (ill.), 35-36 – Salomon 1953, p. 32 – Schweicher 1955, pl. 20 – Salomon 1961, pp. 62-63 (ill.), 64 – Huisman 1963, p. 62 (ill.) – Bacou 1964, pp. 192 (ill.), 195-196 – Dugdale 1965, pp. 95 (col. ill.), 98, 101 – Bascher 1966, p. 88 (col. ill.) – Dugdale 1967a, col. pl. 8-9 – Roger-Marx 1968, pp. 40, 42 – Salomon 1968, pp. 25, 81-82 (col. ill.) – *Jardin des arts*, no. 161, April 1968, p. 76 (ill.) – Preston 1971, pp. 38, 41, 98, 99 (col. ill.), 100, 101 (col. ill.) – Russell, exhib. cat., Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, pp. 33 (ill.), 224 – Dunstan 1973, pp. 45-46 (ill.) – Mauner 1978, p. 196 – Frèches-Thory 1979, p. 310 – Gold and Fildale 1980, pp. 72, 114 (col. ill.) – Georges 1982, pp. 109-111 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 265-266, fig. 131 – Thomson 1988, pp. 40, 44, 49, 72, 97, 115, col. pl. 35 – Warnod 1988, p. 36 – Makarius 1989, pp. 48, 50 (col. ill.), 83 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, pp. 143, 144-145 (col. ill.), 146 – Dumas, exhib. cat., Lyons-Barcelona-Nantes, 1990-91, p. 74 (ill. pp. 74-75) – Groom 1993, pp. 1, 3, 96, 99-108, 113-119, 124, 126, 147-149, 151, 164, 206, col. figs. 165-166.

### VI-99.1 Woman Reading on a Bench

1898  
Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
214 × 161 cm  
Signed and dated, lower left:  
*E Vuillard 98*  
Private collection, Switzerland

### VI-99.2 Woman Seated in an Armchair

1898  
Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
214 × 161 cm  
Signed and dated, lower right:  
*E Vuillard mai 98*  
Private collection, Switzerland

'They are masterpieces. Never had Vuillard gone so far; never would he go further.' Claude Roger-Marx's enthusiasm appears to be shared by a great many art historians. Indeed, these two panels commissioned for the apartment of Jean Schopfer (who wrote under the pen-name Claude Anet) at 132 avenue Victor-Hugo, epitomize between them much of Vuillard's genius. Having just returned from a trip to Italy with Jean Schopfer and Maurice Denis in January 1898, the artist set to work immediately and finished them by May of the following year. The scene takes place in the garden behind Le Relais, Misia and Thadée Natanson's house at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne and the new haunt of the *Revue Blanche* crowd. For the first time in one of Vuillard's decorative ensembles, the figures in the foreground are clearly identifiable: Misia is seen dozing in a rocking-chair on the right; on the left, we recognize Bonnard playing with a cat and Marthe Mellot reading a magazine (this is confirmed by one of Vuillard's pen-and-ink drawings, see ill.). Other figures – a woman in a dark red cape and a man with a straw hat – are glimpsed in the background, but they are unidentifiable; they could be cousins of the figures in *Public Gardens* of 1894. Two photographs taken

by the artist show us the installation of the panels in Schopfer's apartment, where heavy velvet curtains separated them. Judging by a preliminary drawing published by Gloria Groom ('Initial Sketch for the Claude Anet Panels', 1993, see ill.), Vuillard appears initially to have conceived the decoration as a single gigantic panel with a receding horizontal perspective at the centre of the composition. With the exception of *The Game of Shuttlecock* (V-28.6) and one



E. V., *Marthe Mellot Reading*, sketch for the first decoration, graphite and brown ink on paper, 8.1 × 7.3 cm. Private collection.

of the six *Desmarais Panels* (1892), there are no similar examples of a central void in a Vuillard decoration. When the two panels are placed edge to edge, the spatial continuity between them is manifest; and if we view them thus in conjunction with one of the prints in Hiroshige's *Views of Edo* – the *View of Kasumigaseki*, a copy of which Vuillard kept in his personal collection (see ill.) – we get a clearer sense of their disposition. In the Japanese print a distant vanishing-point is framed by walls in front of which a number of figures are seen to be going about their business: two men are strolling towards the background on the left (about



Andō Hiroshige, *Distant View of Kasumigaseki*, print from *Views of Edo*. Private collection.





VI-99.1



E. V., first idea for the *Schopfer Panels*, c. 1898, graphite and brown ink on paper, 17.5 x 25 cm. Private collection.

where Bonnard and Marthe Mellot are placed in Vuillard's panels), while three geishas are seen approaching the spectator on the right. The centre of the composition is given over to a large empty space, a kind of esplanade at the top of some stairs commanding a distant view of Edo. The quality of the perspective sharply converging on a void in the centre is similar in both works. The continuity, as one makes it out, between the two panels is underscored by the matt weft and uniform distribution of

pale-green, grey and metallic blue tones over the entire surface of the composition, once again confirming the link between Vuillard's painting and the art of tapestry. We are leagues away here from an Impressionist-like *déjeuner sur l'herbe*; what we have instead is one of those languid scenes of *fin-de-siècle* somnolence or torpor that Vuillard renders to perfection. 'So, what sort of general truth does he teach us? The pleasure of abiding in a beautiful garden, or would it not be more accurate to say: the pleasure of imagining a beautiful garden one could dwell in?'<sup>2</sup> The drowsy variegation of the grey and white sky enhances the muted sheen of the violet reds and deep purples scattered about the surface of the two canvases in what appear to be random little pools. The *smanie della villeggiatura* that Goldoni lampooned in his day has been transposed to a greyish, pearly atmosphere the musical equivalent of which might be a Chausson or Fauré composition, or better still, Debussy's *Nuages*. Vladimir Jankélévitch's signal description of this atmospheric quality in Debussy's music could apply just as well to the *Schopfer Panels*: 'Nuages, the finale of the first orchestral *Nocturne*, evokes what Paul Dukas termed a "grey agony softly tinged with white" ... Its landscapes are often-times ocean-like, they have the colour of sand and ashes, mist and grief.'<sup>3</sup> In *Nuages*, sequences of rhythmic microstructures force themselves on the ear, interweaving against a broad, unchanging background cadence intended to suggest a uniformly tranquil sky. The same undercurrent of melancholy flows through both compositions, Debussy's and Vuillard's; both are marked by a sense of dullness and changelessness – of a *perpetuum mobile*. 'The notion of sunshine has been replaced by that of summer; there are no shadows on the ground; every object is flat; the decreasing scale of the figures alone evokes a feeling of depth. Traditional perspective has been jettisoned and extraordinary liberties are taken with the facts of [ordinary] experience. Every type of ambiguity is skilfully maintained.'<sup>4</sup> In a neat reversal of Virgil's *suadentque cadentia sidera somnos*,<sup>5</sup> the sun behind its veil of clouds appears to have soft-

ened the contours and rendered the figures drowsy. One reads a magazine, another plays with the cat, others lounge, meditate, sulk in silence or stand around like wallflowers in the background (an unavoidable simile given the context). Yet, as in one of Puvis de Chavanne's 'murals', not a word is uttered: in an atmosphere of petrified expectation typical of the Symbolist culture of the 1890s, the figures seem to ignore each other. Oddly enough, having yet again used his friends as protagonists in one of his motionless sagas, Vuillard has left out Schopfer himself. Perhaps the reason was that, as Misia subsequently confided, Schopfer moved in loftier circles: 'Claude Anet [Schopfer] ... came to our house once for a formal dinner we gave for Georges Bibesco ... [The guests included] the painter Helleu, Sem, the beautiful Marthe Letellier and her husband, [and] Marcel Proust – still very young and already sickly – a dozen friends in all. Everyone was in black tie, except for Claude Anet who was resplendent in a white tie. When I asked him in whose honour he had dressed so grandly, he replied that after leaving us, he was going to call on Princesse Murat.'

'Is it enjoyable at the Murats?' I asked him. 'How do you mean, *enjoyable*? What do you call 'enjoyable', Misia? They're society (*gens du monde*).'

'Society? What do you call society? Aren't we society too?' I asked, astonished. He burst out laughing.

'You are extraordinary! You haven't a clue! The Murats are people who would never receive you in their home!'<sup>6</sup>

There is a somewhat surprising family resemblance between the *Schopfer Panels* and a much later work of Vuillard's, the Palais de Chaillot *La Comédie* (1937, XII-132). While the latter is a more 'kitsch', more learned composition, filled with allusions to Molière and Shakespeare, it is enlivened by effects of raking electric light, which the young Vuillard of the Symbolist years would never have ventured to employ. Much later on in his life, and particularly at the time he was working on *The Clos Cézanne Garden at Vauresson* (1920, XI-52), the artist occasionally mentioned the *Schopfer Panels*



VI-99.2

and referred to them at least once in his Journal as a 're-invention' of his early masterpieces.

<sup>1</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Segard 1914, p. 284.

<sup>3</sup> Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Debussy et le mystère de l'instant*, Paris, Plon, 1976, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> Roger-Marx, 1946a, p. 128.

<sup>5</sup> 'And the stars beckon us to sleep', Virgil, *Aeneid*, II.

<sup>6</sup> Sert 1952, pp. 105-106.



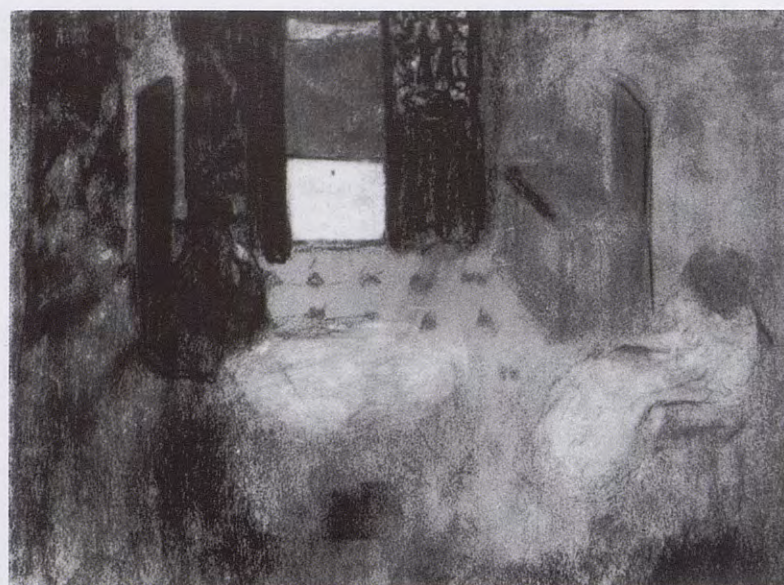
# VI-100

## The Stéphane Natanson Screen. Figures in an Interior (study)

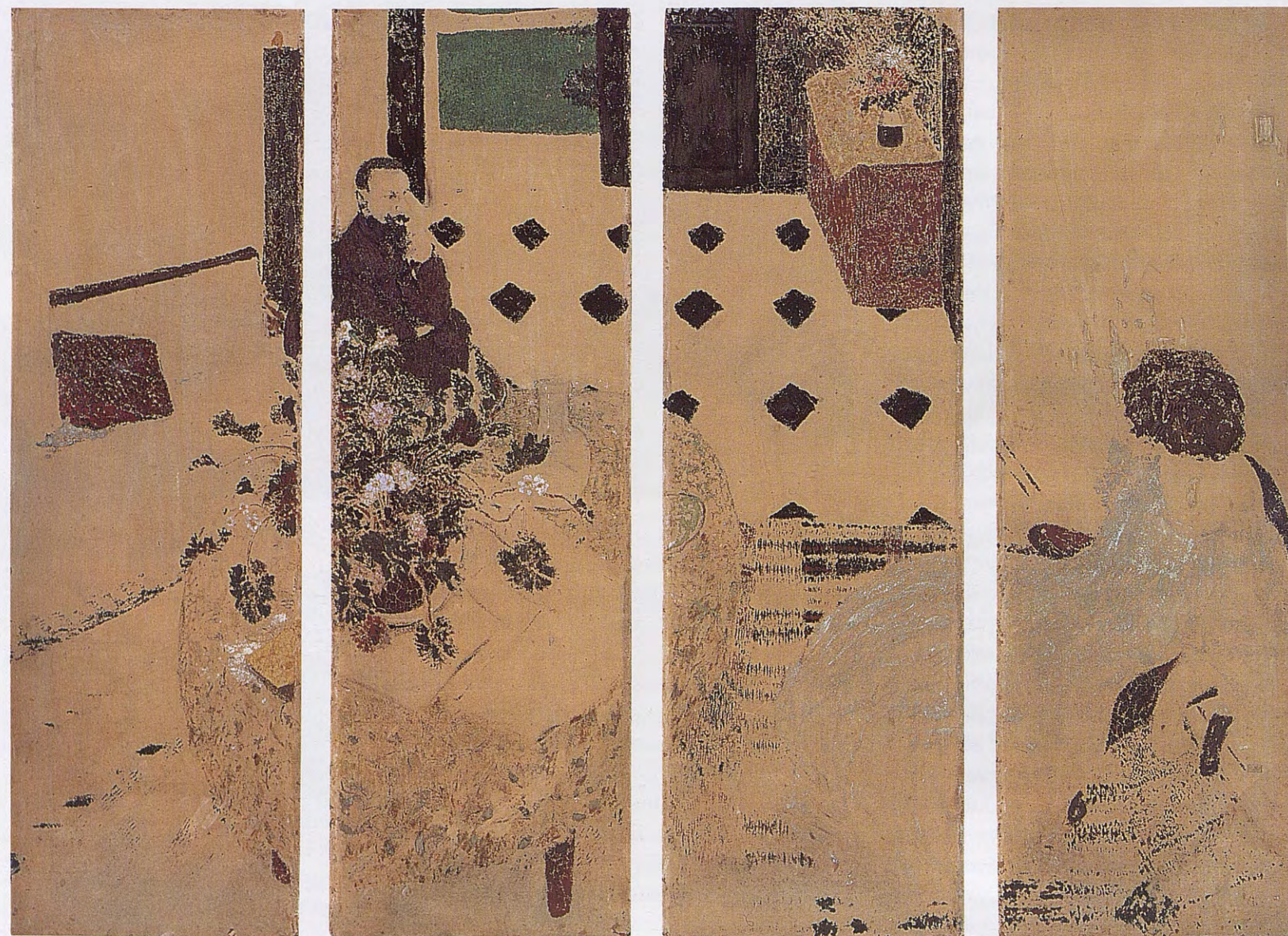
1898  
Pastel on paper, 31 × 41 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** Two seated figures – a man on the left, and a woman in a pink peignoir on the right – are presented à contre-jour to either side of a round table with a yellow top, against an ochre wall. On the left are two tapestry panels of the same blue as the open door in the centre, through which we glimpse a bright white garden path and, a little further back, a lawn dotted with red geraniums. (JS)



VI-100



VI-101

# VI-101

## The Stéphane Natanson Screen. Figures in an Interior

1898  
Glue-based distemper on linen, mounted on canvas (assembled as a mural painting), 129 × 170 cm (present state)  
Private collection, London

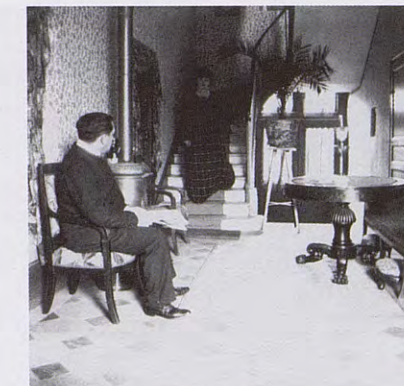
**Provenance:** Stéphane Natanson, Paris, 1898, 400 F; Louis Natanson, 1905 – Maurice Laffaille, Paris – Lefevre, London, 1959 – Private collection, London.

**Exhibition:** Washington D.C.-New Haven, 1984-85, no. 7 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Segard 1914, p. 321 – Wilson-Bureau 1986, p. 46 – Frèches-Thory and Terrasse 1990, pp. 172-173 (col. ill.) – Groom 1993, p. 41, fig. 62 – Libby 1994, pp. 42-43, 45.

Vuillard has come a long way since the *Desmarais Screen* (V-32). His manner of disposing forms and areas of colour is now closely related to his lithographic work. His flat tints look as if they have been printed on the screen. The extremely narrow palette allows him to reverse the traditional, 'Flemish style' chromatic arrangement of bright colours in the forefront and increasingly dull tones as the picture-space recedes. Here, in contradistinction, the more vivid hues are relegated to the background, while the foreground figures are all but transparent.

A photograph taken by the artist in 1898 at Le Relais (see ill.) presents Misia – it is clearly a staged shot – descending the stairs to greet Romain Coolus, who is seated in the villa's entrance hall. While the perspective employed reverses that of screen, it nevertheless confirms the existence and tangible reality of some of the objects represented there: the black and white tiled floor, the armchair that Misia sits in and the round table (though the latter's legs are straight in the screen, which is not the case in the photograph). The stove to one side of Romain Coolus does not figure in the painting; the rug does, but it is placed under Misia's armchair. In contrast to the preliminary sketch (VI-100), in which the scene is depicted



E. V., Misia going down the stairs, 1899, photograph. Private collection.

from an almost standard perspective, the picture-space of the screen gives one the impression it has been broken up into flat units. And the figure facing Misia is no longer Coolus but Stéphane Natanson, the architect who was instrumental in obtaining the *Desmarais Panels* commission for Vuillard. His Rasputin-like features, preserved in a contemporaneous photograph (see ill.), are instantly recognizable. His strangely fixed stare establishes a spatial as well as a psychological link between the scene's two protagonists, who would oth-



Stéphane Natanson and Édouard Vuillard at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, c. 1898, photograph by Alfred (Athis) Natanson. Private collection.

erwise have risked being swallowed up in a welter of unfinished matter. Vuillard manifestly positioned himself on the stairs to paint this composition, a few steps above where Misia stands in the photograph. Taken from mid-way up the stairs, then, the view presented on the screen appears to be a synaesthetic left-to-right 'reading' of the space below, and it suggests the impressions of a person slowly descending the steps. Anticipating Marcel Duchamp by a few years, Vuillard, the artist driven by a 'bachelor apparatus' is also the young man descending a staircase. Here, however, he

does not set out to show us the successive phases of a continuous movement 'bleeding' together into a single image; instead, his art at this juncture – the turn of the century – seeks to impart a unified spatial coherence to the multi-faceted objects his watchful eye picks out at different intervals and from a succession of staggered viewpoints. He begins by focussing on the left side of the room, where his attention is drawn to Stéphane Natanson; then, descending a step or two, he directs his gaze to a neutral area in the centre where the round table vies with the pattern of the floor tiles; and, lastly, he draws closer to us and his eye falls at a sharp angle on Misia. To speak in cinematic terms, what he paints is a kind of rotating dolly shot, and the result is, as Claude Roger-Marx aptly puts it, 'a planar movement, or, to be more precise, a series of juxtaposed close-up and distant views, giving the latter almost as much vigour as the former.'<sup>1</sup> What strikes one most about this extraordinary composition is its 'Oriental' mood, akin to that of a Persian or Turkish miniature; it is as though the artist were presenting us with a formal scene in a Middle-Eastern divan, transposed to a middle-class holiday home. It is perhaps the boldest of all Vuillard's experiments in apprehending space within a spiral-like perspective, a simultaneous totality that is anything but a precipitous view of the reality surrounding him.

<sup>1</sup> Roger-Marx 1946a, p.128.



Reconstruction of the screen with the original frame.





VI-102

## VI-102 The Lilacs

1899-1900; reworked in 1908  
Glue-based distemper on canvas,  
240 × 155 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Private collection, France

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Prince Emmanuel Bibesco, Paris, around 1900 – Returned to Vuillard to be reworked, end of 1907, beginning of 1908 – Prince Antoine Bibesco, Paris – Taken back by Vuillard, Paris, Oct. 1918; studio – Private collection – Galerie Bellier, Paris, 1983 – Private collection, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Essen (?), 1905, no. 109 – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, Feb. 1908, no. 3 – Florence, 1998, no. 101, p. 137 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Segard 1914, p. 286, no. 1, p. 321 – Besson 1949, fig. 21 – Wilson-Bareau 1986, pp. 39-43, 46, ill. 18-19 – Groom 1993, pp. 139,

150-153, 156, 158, 162-164, ill. 238 (1st state) and 240.

**Description** (final state): *On the left, against a background of greenery with patches of blue sky, are two standing figures: a man in blue, leaning on a walking-stick, and a woman in a plaid dress wrapped in a white shawl. In the foreground is a lithe-bodied woman.* (JS)

A decorative panel in a vaguely Art Nouveau manner, *The Lilacs* was substantially altered by the artist in 1908. Vuillard is known to have had a habit of making changes to his paintings over time, often for diplomatic reasons. *Large Interior with Six Figures* (IV-215), *The Terrace at Vasouy* (VIII-37 and VIII-38) and *The Clos Cézanne Garden at Vaucresson* (XI-52) all confirm this practice. In the earlier version of *The Lilacs*,<sup>1</sup> Vallotton, recognisable by his hat and cane, could clearly be seen to be walking towards Misia; the composition was close in feeling to *The Haystack*

(VIII-226.2) and *The Path* (VIII-226.1) of 1907-1908. Vuillard gives Misia the same provocative stance in *The Vines*, where her figure is inspired by a photograph that shows her standing, precisely, next to Vallotton (see ill.). She is clad in the same woollen dress with lit-

First state  
of VI-102.

tle squares as in the famous *Misia and Vallotton at Villeneuve* (VI-71). We recognize the dreadful little dog trotting at her feet from a series of photographs taken at Villeneuve (see ill.). Prince Bibesco may possibly have considered this sylvan rendez-vous between two well-known figures of the Parisian art scene to be somewhat risqué for his drawing-room. On 3 February 1908, Vuillard noted, 'am reworking on the Misia and Vallotton panel'.<sup>2</sup> He then replaced his Swiss friend with two unrecognisable figures. The result is a somewhat undecipherable composition dominated by the highly decorative effect of patches of blue sky showing through imperceptibly swaying autumn leaves.

<sup>1</sup> Juliet Wilson-Bareau (1986) was the first to publish and interpret the two versions of this panel.  
<sup>2</sup> E. V., Journal, II.1, fol. 25r.



E. V., Misia and Félix Vallotton in the vineyards at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, photograph. Private collection.



VI-103

## VI-103 A Walk in the Vineyard

1900  
Oil on canvas, 260.4 × 248.9 cm  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art,  
Los Angeles, 59.75

**Provenance:** Jack Aghion, Paris, 1900 – Jos Hessel, Paris – Henry Van de Velde for Karl Ernst Osthaus, The Hague, 1,800 F, 1908 – Integrated in a *Salonkul-*

*tur*, designed by Van de Velde at Osthaus's Hohenhof residence, 1908-21 – New York art market, c. 1955 – Hans De Schulthess, United States – De Schulthess gift to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1959.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1900, no. 3 – Essen, Museum Folkwang, 1912, no. 195 – The Hague, Museum Folkwang, 1912, no. 195 – Pomona, California State Polytechnic University, 1963, no. 19 – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 28 (ill.) [*Picnic*, c. 1898] – Chicago-New York, 2001, no. 42, p. 139 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Segard 1914, p. 321 – Lichtwark 1924, pp. 324-327 – *GBA* 58, supplement, no. 1105, Feb. 1961, p. 50 (ill.) – Los Angeles 1965, p. 9 (ill.) – Kozloff 1971, p. 66, fig. 1 – Wilson-Bareau 1986, p. 46 – Schaefer and Fusco 1987, p. 100 (ill.) – Groom 1993, pp. 3, 134-143, 145, 151, col. fig. 214; and exhib. cat., Chicago-New York, 2001, pp. 138, 139 (col. ill.).

This large, almost square-shaped panel was commissioned by Jack Aghion, a budding, turn-of-the-century collector who would



occasionally deal in art, and whose portrait can be seen in two Félix Vallotton paintings, *The Billiard-Table* and *The Poker Game*.<sup>1</sup> Having married one of the Bernheim sisters, he was himself the Swiss Nabi's brother-in-law. It was his intention to create a sort of 'Nabi pantheon', for which Vuillard would have proposed several panels alongside works by his fellow artists. In a letter to Félix Vallotton, dated 9 July 1900, Vuillard informs us: 'We have installed the Aghion panels, and you know that you and Ranson are going to be asked if you want to make *décorations* for the two extremities of the room.'<sup>2</sup> Aghion was for a brief moment in possession of an important collection, including several van Goghs, a large number of Nabi artists (Bonnard, Vuillard, Roussel), and Impressionists such as Caillebotte and Pissarro. *A Walk in the Vineyard* was put up for sale at the time of his bankruptcy in 1908, when the Belgian architect Henry Van de Velde bought it on behalf of the collector Karl-Ernst Osthaus, whose home in Hagen (Westphalia) he was decorating. It was hung in a *Kultursalon* that was markedly Jugendstil in appearance.<sup>3</sup>

Thanks to research carried out by Gloria Groom, we know that Vuillard used several of his own photographs to 'place' the figures populating this large decorative composition. One of these photographs shows a front view of Misia (see ill.), who is standing beside a seated Vallotton with a characteristically sensual swaying of the hips. In the decorative work Vuillard presents her in the same pose seen from behind, with two men lying beside her in the grass. One of these is the painter himself, who is wearing a bowler hat. Recognizing the figures is of no great importance, however, in a work that deliberately verges on abstraction. A second photograph (see ill.) frames a group of young girls, one of whom, seen from behind, is transferred to *A Walk in the Vineyards*; a rather fine touch is the shadow of Vuillard-the-photographer that falls across the path. Since, as Vuillard says, the photographs served as reminders ('*des aide-mémoire*'), his manner of representing the hills and vineyards of Villeneuve-sur-Yonne bears no relation to the perspectives exposed in his snapshots. As in the panels made for Adam Natanson at the same period (V-96.1 to V-



E. V., Young girls in the vineyards at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, photograph. Private collection.

96.5) the painter has significantly pushed up the horizon, Japanese-style, giving greater scope to the splashes of ochre, orange, crimson and rose-madder that dapple the ground. It is one of Vuillard's most original 'tapestries', unflinchingly severe; it might almost be a piece of latter-day military camouflage. As Groom remarks, its 'palette of closely related colors [is] devoid of value contrasts'.<sup>4</sup> It is as though a grimy twilight had dripped blood onto the vegetation, a gauze veil fallen over the landscape, mortifying the colour relations. The lower half of the panel is given up to an explosion of matt substances, narrow filaments of abstract matter placed side by side with a trowel. The artist's use of oil builds, as it were, on what he has learned to do using the medium of glue-tempera: to achieve a smooth picture surface from which all asperities have been removed, and to tone down contrasts to an almost provocative degree. The harsh *contre-jour* casts a kind of eerie penumbra over the figures, engulfing the dying day in an agony of reds and browns. All in all, it is Vuillard's most Fauvist work and one of his boldest experiments; and though it is one of the least pleasing to the eye, in it Vuillard is revealed to be a creator who shuns compromise and puts his original vision across with great force.

<sup>1</sup> Félix Vallotton, *The Billiard-Table*, 1902, oil on cardboard, 67 x 52 cm., priv. coll., and *The Poker Game*, 1902, oil on cardboard, 52 x 67.5 cm., Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

<sup>2</sup> E. V., letter to Félix Vallotton, in Guisan and Jakubec 1974, p. 42. Quoted in Groom 2001, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> See Groom 2001, p. 140, fig. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Groom 2001, p. 138.

## VI-104 Félix Vallotton in His Studio

c. 1900

Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 63 x 49.5 cm

Signed, lower right: E. Vuillard

Inscribed, on rear: *Félix Vallotton dans son atelier, 6, rue de Milan, 1900*

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, R.F. 1977-390

**Provenance:** Émile Mayrisch, Colpach (Luxembourg) – Rodrigues-Henriques, Paris – Carle Dreyfus, Paris, Nov. 1934 – Dreyfus bequest to the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1953; transferred in 1977 to Musée du Louvre, Paris (Palais de Tokyo); transferred to Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 1986.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 75 [*Le Peintre Vallotton*] – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 6 – Paris, Louvre, 1953, no. 315 (ill.) – Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1955, no. 22 – Berlin, Akademie der Künste, 1956 – Frankfurt-Luxembourg, 1956, no. 95 – Limoges, Evêché, 1956, no. 36 – Cardiff, National Museum of Wales, 1957, no. 80 – London, R.B.A. Galleries, 1957, no. 23 – Tours, Beaux-Arts, 1957, no. 51 – Milan, Palazzo Reale, 1959, no. 40 (ill.) – Otterlo, Kröller-Müller, 1960-61 – Mannheim, Kunsthalle, 1963-64, no. 317 (ill.) – South America, travelling exhib., 1965 – International travelling exhibition, 1969, no. 7 – Toronto-San Francisco-Chicago, 1971-72, no. 53 (ill.) – Lyons-Barcelona, 1990-91, no. 89, p. 66 (ill.) – Zurich, 1993, no. 179 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Dorival 1953, p. 250 – Humbert 1954a, pl. 46; and 1954b, p. 14 – Cassou, Dorival, Homolle 1954, p. 165 – Dorival 1961, pp. 37, 96, 97 (col. ill.) – Salomon 1961, p. 70 (ill.) – Barilli 1967d, p. 193 (ill.) – Kozloff 1971, p. 70, fig. 8 – Preston 1971, p. 19, fig. 14 – Ciaffa 1985, pp. 272-273, fig. 136 – Compin and Roquebert 1986, p. 283 (ill.) – Makarius 1989, p. 42 (ill.) – Rosenblum 1989, p. 580 (col. ill.) – Compin, Lacambre, Roquebert 1990, p. 479 (ill.) – Bernier 1991, p. 154 (ill.) – Newman 1991, p. 12, fig. 2.

**Description:** Vallotton is seen seated in the corner of a room, on a beige-coloured table with spindly legs. His suit is dull blue and somewhat faded in appearance, like the rest of the composition, and his hair is grey. His head masks the corner of a painting, the blue and red tones of which enliven the wall; his legs are crossed, his feet shod in red slippers. To the left is a piece of furniture sketched in beige and black. Light-grey and russet-red rug on the floor. (JS)

This is yet another farewell to Vuillard's Nabi style. The bare cardboard support just



VI-104

visible in the contours around the sitter's clothes, and which produces an imperceptible red vibration, recalls much earlier works, such as *In Bed* (II-123) and the *Portrait of Lugné Poe* (III-25), both datable to 1891. The patch of bright colour formed by the artist's red slippers enlivens the dull blue background. The pose is only halfway relaxed: the sitter's crossed arms and sullen posture in a corner of the studio convey a powerful image of Vallotton's misanthropic scepticism. It is as though Vuillard had anticipated the witty thumb-nail portrait of Vallotton that Annette Vaillant was to paint many years later in her book, *Le Pain polka*: 'that uncommunicative gentleman, whose corrosive wit was nonetheless a thing to



E. V., preparatory drawing for Félix Vallotton in his Studio, graphite on paper, 10 x 12.7 cm. Private collection.

dread, that hermit amongst his friends ... that mandarin from the Vaud lapped in his puritan garment, the armour-plating of his

strange personality'.<sup>1</sup> The facial details scratched in with the handle of the brush, on the other hand, are characteristic of the artist's manner between 1899 and 1900. A painting on silk from the artist's private collection and representing a Chinese marriage ceremony hangs on the wall.<sup>2</sup> (Might this be a discreet allusion to Vallotton's recent marriage to Gabrielle Rodrigues? According to the Swiss painter, the news of their engagement had 'flabbergasted' his bachelor friend).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vaillant 1974, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Perucchi-Petri, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> Guisan and Jakubec, 1973, p. 188.





VI-105

## VI-105 The Green Lamp

1897-99  
Oil on cardboard, 38 × 71 cm  
Signed, lower left: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Captain Richard A. Peto, Isle of Wight (Great Britain), c. 1938; Mrs Rosemary Peto, London – Lefevre, London, 1982 – John Sainsbury, London – Private collection.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1938, no. 40 [*La Lampe verte*, c. 1895] – Great Britain, travelling exhib., 1947-48, no. 27 – Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy, 1948, no. 92 – Great Britain, travelling exhib., 1951-52, no. 29 – Cleveland-New York, 1954, pp. 57 (ill.), 101 – Plymouth, City Museum and Art Gallery, 1960, no. 85 – London, Lefevre, 1982, no. 23 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Chastel 1946, p. 49 (ill.) – Ritchie 1954, p. 16.

**Description:** In the reading-room of *La Revue Blanche*, a long, paper-strewn table with two oil lamps stands in front of a book-lined wall on the right. The lamp on the left has a hemispherical glass shade, the one on the right a cloth shade. Just recognizable on a sofa in the background are Thadée Natanson and Misia, her face turned towards a third figure. On the far left is a statue-like female figure leaning on a tall stand. The glow from one of the

lamps is reflected in the glass pane of a framed painting on the wall (possibly *The Lady with the Lamp*, VI-50). (JS)

The splendid nocturnal halo surrounding the figures 'resonates' throughout the room, its effect amplified by the composition's unusual horizontal format. The panoramic framing allows the eye to linger over the jumble of papers, newspapers and books spread over the table and bespeaking intellectual pursuits in the shelter of the reading-room of *La Revue Blanche*. The bust on the stand is probably a copy of Nicolaus



Cast of the *Bust of Sybil* at the Chancellery of Strasbourg, before its destruction in 1870, by Nicolaus Gerhaerts von Leyden, 1463-64, red earthenware.

Gerhaerts von Leyden's fifteenth-century *Sybil* (also known as *Barbara*),<sup>1</sup> which originally stood in the Chancellery entrance of



E. V., Misia, Thadée and Romain Coolus beneath a lamp, 1899, photograph. Private collection.

Strasbourg cathedral.<sup>2</sup> Damaged by Prussian bombing in 1870, the head alone survived and was preserved at the Liebighaus in Frankfurt. Here, it may well be a discreet allusion to the sufferings of the French nation during the Franco-Prussian War; in any event, its presence within the picture-space reinforces the underlying meaning of the composition.

The two lamps associated in a kind of colloquy – a frequent image in Vuillard's work of this period (see *Misia at the Piano*, VI-45) – provide a pretext for a subtle contrasting of green and gold in a composition of predominantly bronze tones. There is

something almost exaggerated about the way Misia, Thadée and, it might be, Romain Coolus are relegated to the back of the room, their tiny figures dwarfed by the objects looming up around them. This playing around with proportions would later appear, to particularly memorable and tender effect, in *The Infant on the Carpet* (VII-297) and *My Mother Reading* (IX-32). The welter of papers on the large table is treated in the manner of Turner or, better still, Rembrandt, in what might be a tongue-in-cheek, bourgeois version of *The Conspiracy of Julius Civilis*<sup>3</sup> reinterpreted as a secret nocturnal consultation. Night was, in a manner of speaking, the chosen accomplice of the Natansons' intellectual activities, as would seem to be confirmed by a photograph taken by Vuillard at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne (see ill.): in it, the same three friends – Thadée, Misia and Coolus – are gathered around a lamp glowing in the darkness.

<sup>1</sup> We owe this insight to the erudition of Anne Pinget, general curator of sculpture at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Catalogue *La Sculpture allemande de la fin du Moyen Âge*, Paris, Musée du Louvre, 1992, note 12.

<sup>3</sup> Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, called Rembrandt, *The Conspiracy of Julius Civilis*, 1661, oil on canvas, 196 × 309 cm, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

## VI-106 Félix Fénéon in the Offices of *La Revue Blanche*

1896-98  
Oil on cardboard, 46.5 × 57.5 cm  
Signed and dedicated, lower left: *à Félix Fénéon bien amicalement E. Vuillard*  
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 41.725

**Provenance:** Félix Fénéon, Paris, 1901 – Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York, 1938 – Donation to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1941.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1907-08, no. 139 – Paris, Les Cadres, 1936, no. 50 [*À La Revue Blanche*] – Paris, Bernheim-Jeune, 1938, no. 56 – Cleveland, Museum of Art, 1972-73, pl. 4 – Rochester, Memorial Art Gallery, 1984, no. 81 (col. ill.).

**Bibliography:** Rewald 1948a, pp. 116-117, fig. 8 – Sutton 1954, p. 32 – Rudenstine 1976,



VI-106

pp. 694-696, no. 250 (ill.) – Bernier 1991, p. 112 (col. ill.) – Koella, exhib. cat., Zurich-Paris, 1993-94, p. 272, fig. 121.2.

The anarchist critic Félix Fénéon, famous for his austere appearance, is portrayed in the

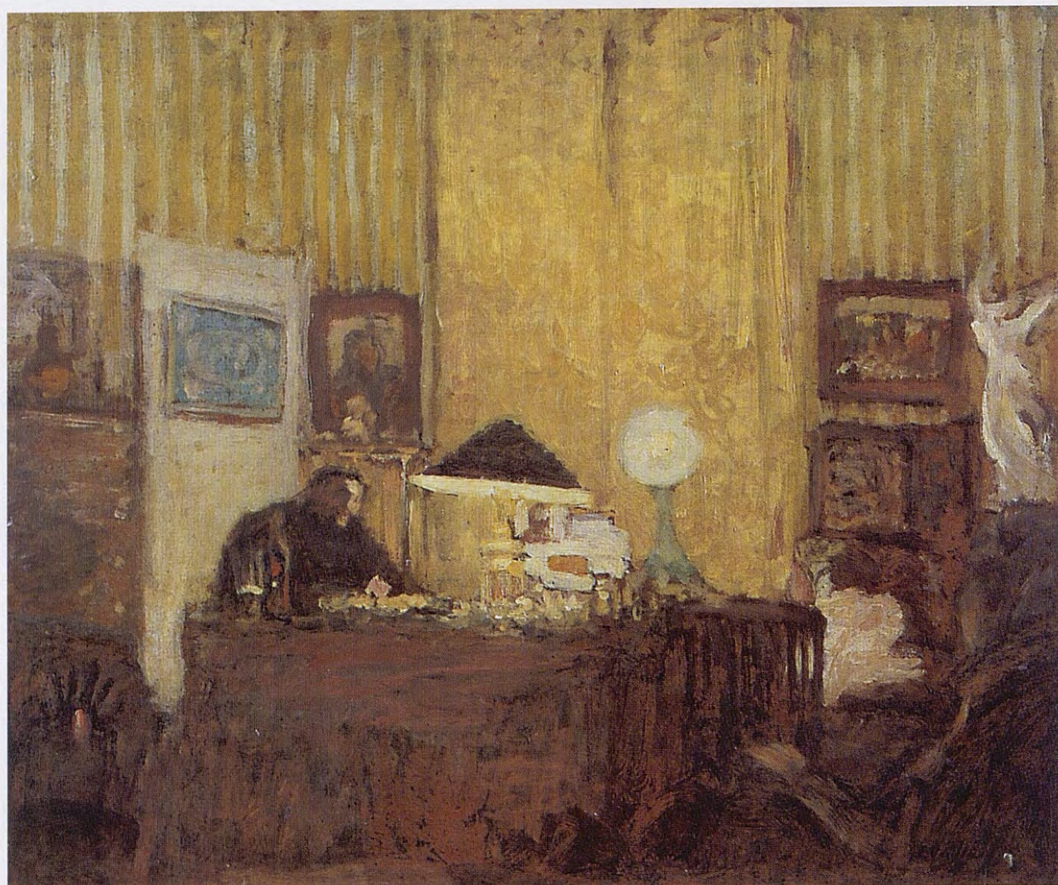


Félix Vallotton, *Félix Fénéon at La Revue Blanche*, 1896, oil on canvas. Private collection

very same room he sat in for a portrait that Vallotton had painted a short while earlier (see ill.). The same calendar hangs from the same glass partition. Vuillard's focus is slightly wider than the Swiss painter's and, above all, his painting is worked in a deliberately exaggerated vein: notice particularly the precarious balance of the famous writer on his chair and the unnatural angle of his

bent torso. In a striking effect, red accents from the reading-room can be glimpsed behind the door on the right. Although this painting is usually dated 1901, it can only have been painted before 1899, when the Belgian architect Henry Van de Velde redecorated *La Revue Blanche* offices from top to bottom, utterly transforming the room in which the editor-in-chief officiated.





VI-107

### VI-107 Thadée Natanson at His Desk

c. 1899  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
panel, 47 × 56.5 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E. Vuillard*  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Thannhauser, New York – Werner E. Josten, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 1 May 1977, lot 37 (col. ill.) – Helen Frankenthaler, New York – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Bibliography:** *Architectural Digest*, March 1985, p. 172 (col. ill.).

**Description:** The centre of the composition is largely taken up by the massive writing-desk at which the sitter is working by the light of an oil lamp with a conical shade. The curtains of the room are drawn, and paintings hang on the broad-striped wallpaper. To the right stands a cast of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, to the left a chiffonier. The silhouette of a seated woman can be seen in the right foreground. (JS)

A more traditional composition than *The Green Lamp* (VI-105), though it too draws its lighting from a couple of lamps, this appealing portrait of Thadée Natanson in his



Pierre Bonnard, *Children in a Pool*, 1899, oil on panel. Private collection.

lair serves as a pretext for Vuillard to engage in one of his favourite exercises: disentangling a figure gradually from his surroundings, while heaping up the kind of familiar details that define him. Bonnard's *Children in a Pool* (see ill.) – which Octave Mirbeau subsequently acquired at the sale of Thadée Natanson's collection in 1908 – can be made out on the panel above the editor's head. A cast of the *Winged Victory of Samothrace* stands on the far right. Once again, Vuillard is looking back to the Rembrandtesque tradition of the night-time portrait of an intellectual working into the small hours of the morning. To be sure, such paintings were an established, not to say obligatory, exercise in nineteenth-century French art, beginning with Jacques-Louis David's fawning *Portrait of Napoleon in*

*his Study*,<sup>1</sup> which shows the emperor at four in the morning – we know this from the clock behind him – thereby suggesting that genius never sleeps.

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Louis David, *Portrait of Napoleon in His Study*, 1812, oil on canvas, 204 × 125 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

### VI-108 The Tea Party

c. 1899  
Oil on cardboard, 44.4 × 26 cm  
Signed, upper right: *E. Vuillard*  
Private collection, Switzerland

**Provenance:** Raphaël Gérard, Paris – Bernheim-Jeune, Paris (stock no. 22476, *Le Déjeuner*), 4,000 F, 11 Jan. 1921 – Percy Moore Turner, London – E. Richard Bühler, Winterthur, 1932 – Bühler sale, Galerie Fischer, Lucerne, 2 Sept. 1935, lot 18 – Nathan, Zurich (Switzerland), 2,500 FS – Private collection, Winterthur (Switzerland).

**Exhibitions:** Zurich, Kunsthau, 1932, no. 128 [*Interior, three figures*, 1893-95] – Basle, Kunsthalle, 1949, no. 221 (ill.) – Winterthur, Kunstmuseum, 1949, no. 226 – Zurich, 1964, no. 159.

**Description:** Three figures seated around a laid table: Marthe Mellot on the left, a man who is probably Romain Coolus on the right, and a third person in the centre. (JS)



VI-108



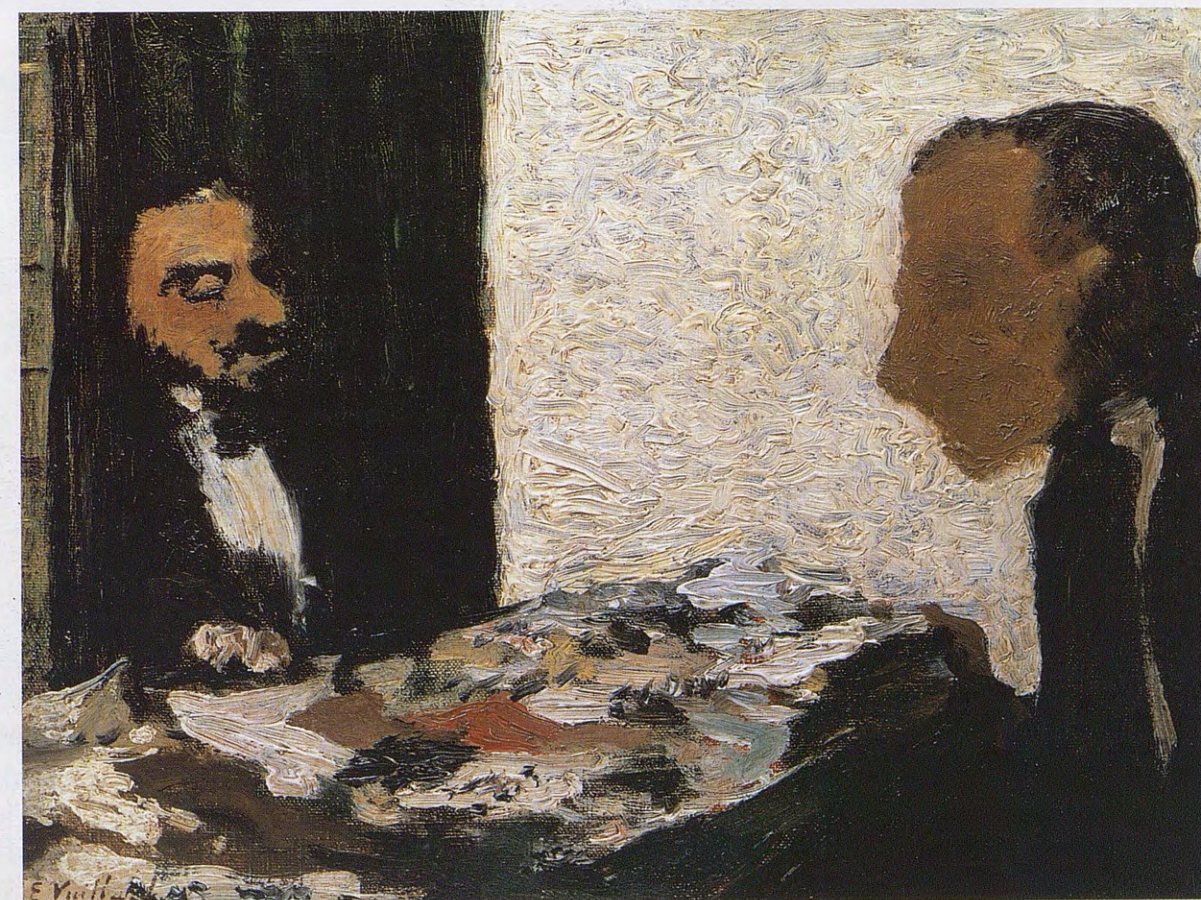
VI-109

### VI-109 Thadée Natanson in His Office at *La Revue Blanche*

c. 1898  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled  
panel, 27.3 × 38 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – George N. Richard, New York, c. 1953 – Richard sale, Christie's, New York, 14 Nov. 1989, lot 23 (col. ill.), bought in – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Bibliography:** Fels 1950, p. 137 (ill.).



VI-110

### VI-110 The Office

c. 1896  
Oil on canvas, 24.7 × 32.4 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Renou et Colle, Paris, 1947 – Mme F. Valentine Dudensing, New York – Knoedler, New York – John Vogelstein, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 23 Oct. 1974, lot 215 (col. ill.), bought in – Vernes, Paris – Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 25 March 1990, lot 5 (col. ill.) – Richard L. Feigen, New York – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris, 2000 – Private collection, Paris.

**Bibliography:** Ciaffa 1985, pp. 282-283, fig. 146 [*The Banker*].

**Description:** A bearded man with a white shirt-front in front of a green curtain. The table before him is strewn with papers and varicoloured objects. On the right is a second figure, roughly profiled against a brightly lit wall. (AC)

Vuillard frequently exercised his feeling for caricature in the years immediately before the turn of the century. Patricia Ciaffa iden-





VI-111

tifies the two figures in this composition – to which the title *The Banker* has sometimes been given – as Toulouse-Lautrec and Lugné-Poe. This seems unlikely where the painter is concerned; on the other hand, the all but featureless profile of the figure on the right does vaguely suggest Lugné-Poe – or, better still, the actor Coquelin Cadet. However, given that this is an isolated composition and that no preliminary sketch for it has yet turned up, the enigma of who and what it represents is not about to be solved. The attitudes of the two protagonists, especially the arrogant, inquisitorial expression of the bearded, moustachioed figure, suggest that the scene may be set in a pawnshop. Even if this were the case, it would not necessarily invalidate the identification of the right-hand figure as Lugné Poe: the stage-director was often hard put to balance the books for his theatrical productions. The bright, rough-cast wall behind his profile provides a stunning foil to the palette-like array of varicoloured objects on the table.

## VI-111 The Game of Cards

1898-1900

Oil on cardboard, 43 × 51 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Jacques Lindon, Paris – Knoedler, New York – Diane Esmond Wallis, New York, c. 1954; Dr Robert Wallis, New York; Hal. B. Wallis, United States; in storage at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (California) Jan. 1987-Feb. 1989 – Wallis sale, Christie's, New York, 10 May 1989, lot 6 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** New York, 1954, pp. 71 (ill.), 102 [*The Natanson Brothers, Misia and Léon Blum*].

**Bibliography:** Exhib. cat., Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 1962, fig. 33 – Mauner 1978, pp. 258-259, fig. 138 – Daniel 1984, pp. 134, 139, fig. 49 – Easton 1989, pp. 126-127, col. fig. 94 – Bernier 1991, p. 69 (col. ill.) – Newman 1991, p. 150, fig. 179.

**Description:** *The colouring of the four figures is determined by the matching, bell-shaped lamps that light up the table. The cold tones of the two male pro-*

*files in the foreground stand out sharply against the yellow-orange lampshades. The two figures in the centre are clad in brown and beige, and four orange accents quicken the dark-green baize. The cardboard support shows through in the outlines of the arm and hand of the player on the left. Vuillard executed the same scene, with a few variations, for a colour lithograph (no. 12 in Roger-Marx's catalogue L'Œuvre gravé de Vuillard). (JS)*

This is one of the few paintings of this period in which we can definitely identify all of the participants. Seen in full profile, Alfred and Thadée Natanson frame the scene; Misia is recognizable in the centre as a sort of Madonna absorbed in nocturnal meditation; and seated next to her is Léon Blum, with his moustache and pince-nez. Vuillard would again tackle the theme of card-players forty years later in *The Game of Bridge at the Clos Cézanne* (XI-86), which incidentally once again includes Alfred Natanson. This masterpiece of Synthetism has all the nocturnal, Symbolist aura of Vuillard's Nabi period and strangely foreshadows such early twentieth-century 'lamp-lit' compositions as Gabriele Münter's *Portrait of Jawlensky* (see ill.). Once again we see



Gabriele Münter, *Portrait of Jawlensky*, 1909, oil on cardboard. Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich.

Vuillard indirectly paving the way for certain aspects of international Fauvism.

## VI-112 The Audition (?)

c. 1896-99

Oil on reinforced cardboard,

21.5 × 15 cm

Stamp 1, lower right

Art market, Paris



VI-112

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sam Salz, New York – Ralph F. Colin, New York, 1966 – Colin sale, Christie's, New York, 10 May 1995, lot 14 (col. ill.) – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas-Custot, Paris.

**Description:** *Two rather murky figures emerging from the surrounding gloom: a bearded man with a bald red head and the all but indistinguishable profile of a woman standing above him, with a black hat decorated with white lace, holding a grey-green paper of some kind. Luminous white highlights. (AC)*

Like *The Office* (VI-110), this is an extremely difficult scene to interpret. It could be a variation on the same motif – a pawnshop – with a woman coming forward either to underwrite a pledge or to implore the pawnbroker to extend her credit. However, the profile of the male figure might also be that of

the impresario Gabriel Astruc,<sup>1</sup> the future director of the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées who was to commission stage-sets from Vuillard in 1912 and 1913 (IX-211.1 to IX-211.10). Astruc, later to be depicted chatting to Nijinsky by his friend, the caricaturist Sem (see ill.), was by the 1890s already famed as a producer of popular café-concert and music-hall shows. The inveterate night-owl Vuillard will have bumped into him on more than one occasion during this period, not least on his own stamping-grounds on rue Saint-Honoré (see *Hell for Leather!*, III-18). If the male figure in the foreground is indeed Astruc, the picture may well depict a singer or actress auditioning for one of Astruc's shows. But again we can do no more than surmise.



Sem, Gabriel Astruc drinking champagne with Vaslav Nijinsky, 1911, caricature, ink. Taken from *Le Figaro*.

<sup>1</sup> Our warm thanks to Jean-Michel Nectoux for confirming this conjecture.





VI-113

### VI-113 Woman in a Red Dress

c. 1899  
Oil on cardboard, 31 × 36 cm  
Stamp 2, lower right  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Mme Elsa Schiaparelli, Paris; Marquise Cacciaputi, Paris – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 31 March 1977, lot 126 (ill.) – Wildenstein, New York – Private collection.

### VI-114 Interior with an Orange Lamp

c. 1899  
Oil on cardboard, 36 × 28 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Paul Pétrides, Paris – Jacques Lindon, Paris – Jacob Rand, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), c. 1957 – Hirschl & Adler, New York, 1960 – Dr R. L. Wylie, United States, c. 1964 – David Griffin, New York – Knoedler, New York – Sale, Sotheby's, New York, 19 Nov. 1986, lot 134 (col. ill.) – Galerie Hopkins-Thomas, Paris – Sale, Hôtel des Ventes, Enghien-les-Bains (France), 27 March 1990, no. 5bis (col. ill.), bought in – Sale, Hôtel des Ventes, Bourg-en-Bresse (France), 25 Nov. 1990, lot 93 (col. ill.) – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** New York, Hirschl & Adler, 1960, no. 69 (ill.).

**Description:** A slightly elevated view of two young women in a drawing-room in the evening, with a card-table covered with dark-green baize in the foreground. The woman standing on the left is seen in profile in front of a fireplace, attired in a sort of white peignoir and unfolding a piece of fabric of the same brilliant white as her dress; her chestnut hair stands out against

the bright blue background. The second woman is seated on the right, in a white blouse with a large green velvet bow at her collar. The lower half of the walls is lined with dark-green and hung with paintings. On the edge of the table near the centre of the painting is an oil lamp, its bright orange shade accentuated by a vivid purple highlight on the right. (JS)

Though rapidly sketched, this interior with figures is one of the first of Vuillard's compositions to evidence his audacious break with the Nabi style; at the same time, it looks ahead to the many interiors he was to paint between 1900 and 1910 (the Hessel's drawing-room, the rue de Naples, and the rest). The table, which takes up much of the composition's foreground, rather curiously recalls



VI-114

Degas' *The Billiard-Room at Le Ménil-Hubert* (see ill.), painted in 1892, at a time when that artist's twilight manner was discarding its more facile effects.



Edgar Degas, *The Billiard-Room at Le Ménil-Hubert*, 1892, oil on canvas. Staatgalerie, Stuttgart.



VI-115

### VI-115 The Drawing-Room

c. 1896-99  
Oil on canvas, 46 × 54 cm  
Stamp 1, lower left  
Private collection, New York

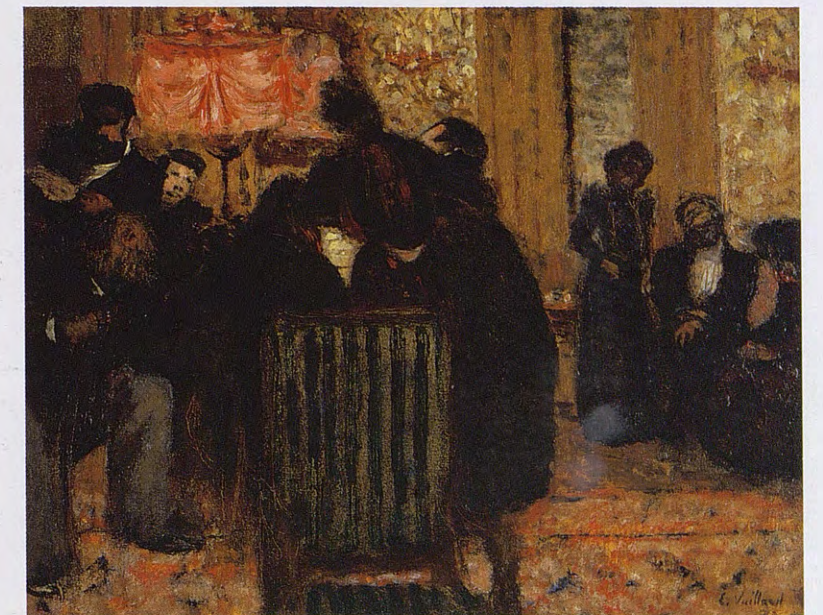
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Louis Carré, Paris – Mme Elsa Schiaparelli, Paris; Marquise Cacciaputi, Paris – Sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 31 March 1977, lot 126bis (col. ill.), bought in – Galerie Spiess, Paris, 1980 – Private collection, New York.

**Description:** A group of ladies and gentlemen in black, in a drawing-room with green walls lit by electric lighting (perhaps at the Lerolles' home?). One of the women is seated in a yellow armchair, in a sinuous posture; another bends her grey head over a pale tabletop. (AC)

### VI-116 The Music Soirée

c. 1896-99  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on cradled panel, 43.2 × 55.2 cm  
Signed, lower right: E Vuillard  
Private collection

**Provenance:** Acquired from the artist by Ambroise Vollard, Paris (stock no. 3467), 200 F, c. 1899 –



VI-116

### VI-117 Interior with Two Women

c. 1899 (?)  
Oil on canvas, 52 × 79 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

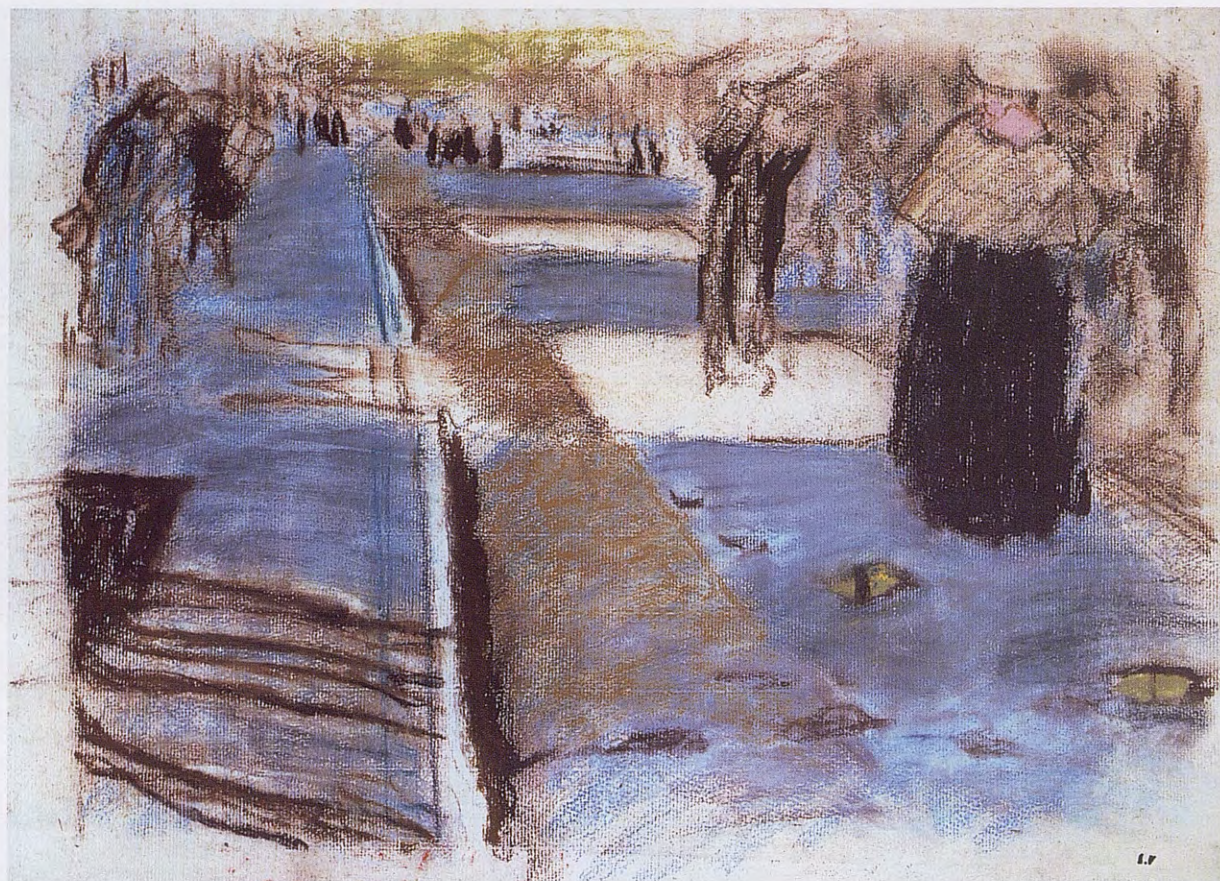
**Provenance:** Artist's studio – New York art market – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Description:** In the foreground is a crudely sketched woman; in the background, a woman in red seated on a dark sofa, holding a piece of material. Green walls. (AC)



VI-117





VI-118

## VI-118 The Avenue

1897-98  
Study for a lithograph (R-M 33)  
Pastel on paper, 31.2 × 43.5 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Art market, Paris

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 36; and 1990, no. 121 (ill.)

## VI-119 Walking through Fields

1897-98  
Study for a lithograph (R-M 34)  
Pastel and coloured pencil on tracing paper, 27 × 36 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 42.



VI-119



VI-120

## VI-120 On the Pont de l'Europe

1897-98  
Study for a lithograph (R-M 40)  
Pastel on paper, 36 × 25 cm  
Signed, lower right: E. V.  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Pierre Balmain, Paris, 1956 – Galerie du Cirque, Paris – Knoedler, New York, 1959 – Jerome A. Newman, Ridgefield (Connecticut), 1960 – Private collection, United States – Maxwell Davidson, New York, 1995 – Current whereabouts unknown.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, Galerie Beaux-Arts, 1949 – Geneva-Zurich, 1950, no. 5 – London, Wildenstein, 1950, no. 6 – Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 59.



VI-121

**Description:** A study for the lithograph from the Volard album, reproduced in Roger-Marx's catalogue, *L'Œuvre gravé de Vuillard*. The taller girl wears a pink dress; her companion, a black blouse and blue apron over a pale yellow skirt sprinkled with pink. Dark-grey background. (JS)

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 96.

**Description:** On the left is the flower-seller, standing next to her basket in a green blouse and a blue apron and dress. Next to her is a girl in a large pale-yellow hat and red belt. In the right foreground is a woman in a pink dress and white apron, in front of whom stands a boy viewed from behind in a sailor suit and yellow straw boater with a blue band. (Study for a lithograph that was never made.) (JS)

## VI-121 The Flower Seller

1897-98  
Study for a lithograph  
Pastel on paper, 42 × 33 cm  
Stamp 3, lower right  
Current whereabouts unknown

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris – Current whereabouts unknown.





VI-122r.

## VI-122 The Garden in Front of the Studio

1901  
Study for a lithograph (R-M 45)  
Glue-based distemper with traces  
of graphite and charcoal on paper,  
Recto: 68.1 × 49 cm  
Verso: 49 × 68.1 cm (not illustrated)  
Signed on verso, lower right: *E.V.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
(Massachusetts), 57.120.a-b

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Galerie Berès, Paris, 1956 – Bought by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Helen and Alice Colburn Fund, 14 February 1957.

**Exhibition:** Paris, Berès, 1956, no. 71.

Notice the Matisse-like appearance of this sketch: the green brushed over a grey ground, the armchair and the woman seen from above, bring to mind some of that artist's compositions between 1912 and 1917, especially *The Palm Leaf* (see ill.).



Henri Matisse,  
*The Palm Leaf*, 1912,  
oil and pencil on  
canvas. National  
Gallery of Art,  
Washington D.C.,  
Chester Dale Fund.



VI-123

## VI-123 Misia Playing the Piano

1902-03 (?)  
Oil on cardboard, 27 × 42 cm  
Signed, lower right: *E Vuillard*  
Thielska Galleriet, Stockholm,  
Inv. no. 403

**Provenance:** Wedding gift from the artist to his Nabi friend, Mögens Ballin, Copenhagen, Nov. 1904 – Count Harry Kessler, Weimar (Germany) – Ernest Thiel, Stockholm – Thielska Galleriet, Stockholm.

**Exhibitions:** Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, 1946, no. 73 – Stockholm, Liljevalchs Konsthall, 1954, no. 396 – Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, 1958, no. 172 – Stockholm, Thielska Galleriet, 1967, no. 51 – Munich, Haus der Kunst, 1968, no. 47 (ill.) – Paris, Orangerie, 1968, no. 71 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Linde and Thiel 1979, p. 114, no. 403 – Makarius 1989, p. 25 (ill.) – Bernier 1991, p. 66 (col. ill.).

## VI-124 Sketch of Misia

c. 1903 (?)  
Oil on cardboard, 43 × 36.5 cm  
Stamp 1, lower right  
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

**Provenance:** Artist's studio – Sidney Cohn, New York – Sale, Galerie Motte, Geneva, 7 Nov. 1969, lot 16 (ill.), bought in – Eli Wallach, New York – Wallach gift to The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1970.

**Exhibitions:** Paris, L'Œil, 1963, no. 22 – London, Lefevre, 1964, no. 18 (ill.).

**Bibliography:** Huisman 1963, p. 64 (ill.) – Preston 1971, fig. 58 – Charles-Roux 1979, p. 154 (ill.) – Ciaffa 1985, p. 338, fig. 192.

**Description:** *The tremulous sensitivity and sharp precision of line, the white of the eye, and especially the modelling of the chin give life to this study, in which only the sitter's face, the almost lacklustre pink emphasising her lips and the black collar of her blouse add a touch of colour to the otherwise grey-beige cardboard ground.* (JS)



VI-124







*The authors*

Antoine Salomon is the son of Jacques, a direct descendant of the Vuillard-Roussel family, who first began the process of producing a catalogue raisonné for the artist upon his death. Throughout his life, he accumulated unique documentation (photographs, preparatory drawings, autobiographical notes, bibliographical details) on the art and creative life of the painter, thanks to which Guy Cogeval was able to draft this critical catalogue.

Guy Cogeval has been the director of the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Montreal since 1998.

A former resident of the Académie de France in Rome, professor at the École du Louvre, chief heritage curator and director of the Musée des Monuments Français from 1992 to 1998, he was curator for the following exhibitions: *Debussy and Symbolism* (Rome, 1984), *Vuillard* (Lyons, Barcelona, Nantes, 1990), the Maurice Denis retrospective in 1994, *Paradise lost: Symbolism in Europe* (Montreal, 1995), the *Years of the Nabis* (Florence and Montreal, 1998) and, more recently, *Hitchcock and Art* (Paris, Montreal, 2001). He is also chief curator of the major retrospective *Vuillard* (Washington, Montreal, Paris, London, 2003-2004).